

## 29 Ideas in 29 Days

In February 2008, Convio launched a campaign called "29 Ideas in 29 Days," geared toward sharing knowledge and ideas within the Convio Fusion Partner network. Each day we sent an email that highlighted an idea for your online initiatives, proof that it works, and a summary of the idea's benefits.

This document contains all of the ideas that were featured in the campaign. Convio Fusion Partners contributed many of the examples which detail how they helped their clients achieve online success.

Have an idea that we didn't cover in our campaign? Please send it to Mandy O'Neill (aoneill@convio.com). We look forward to sharing more innovative ideas and client successes with you in the future!

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## Idea #1: Conditional Content Makes a Difference

Use conditional content to recognize special relationships, past actions and welcome new list members within a single email. Varying a paragraph or two of copy can make an email more relevant and ensure it gets noticed in your constituents' inbox. It's a minimal effort with a big pay-off for relationship building.

### Proof That it Works

With the help of Beaconfire Consulting, National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) added 20,000 new list members through a co-registration effort with a partner. They wanted to make the most of the December year-end fundraising season, and with an urgent advocacy action email they needed a way to welcome these new constituents and also get the core messages to them.



NPCA called attention to the recent online actions of constituents by using conditional content in the first paragraph.

Sending the standard advocacy and fundraising messages without properly welcoming the new supporters was clearly not a good way to go. But, drafting whole new versions of these messages or alternative messages didn't make sense from a time or cost perspective.

Using conditional content, the organization was able to vary the emails easily, achieve the welcome goal, and deliver urgent action messages.

### Benefits

- Easy way to provide constituent recognition;
- Improves the relevance of your email to the individuals on your list; and
- Cost effective.

## Idea #2: Leverage Multi-Channel Marketing to Drive Results

Support and reinforce your Web-based initiatives with offline campaigns. When an email gets buried in an individual's inbox, it might be rediscovered after a reminder received in the mail. By taking a multi-channel approach to fundraising or advocacy, you will remind constituents to participate in your campaign, and at the same time you will reinforce your brand and mission.

### Proof That it Works

By managing its Web-based initiatives and offline development efforts together, the Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB) successfully integrated the messaging for its e-campaigns and direct mail programs. This multi-channel marketing approach improved the CMMB's Web presence, which led to increased revenue for the organization's direct mail program. Leveraging the services of Amergent for direct mail campaigns, and NPAdvisors for strategic consulting, CMMB's integrated online campaigns included messaging and customized donation pages complemented with direct mail appeals. The amount raised through the organization's online giving program increased from just over \$32,000 in FY03 to more than \$168,000 in FY07. From 2005 to 2007, CMMB's email list grew from 4,000 to 32,000 through new online registrations and donors, as well as through email appends that were followed by confirmation emails to the appended constituents.



### Benefits

- Remain top-of-mind;
- Reinforce your brand through multi-channel campaigns;
- Improve campaign results and grow your list.

### Idea #3: Use Web 2.0 Tools and Technologies to Accelerate List Growth

Organizations of all sizes are trying to identify ways to incorporate Web 2.0 tools and technologies into their outreach efforts to produce tangible results. A quick and easy option is to create a Widget—a chunk of code that can be embedded within a page of HTML. By providing supporters with a Widget for their personal Websites and blogs, as well as social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, you can expand your reach and accelerate your list growth.



#### Proof That it Works

Conservation International grew its list by 50,000 subscribers in just two weeks by engaging current and potential supporters in "The Great Turtle Race", a unique international sea turtle conservation event that is organized by Conservation International, the Costa Rica Ministry of Environment and Energy, The Leatherback Trust and the Tagging of Pacific Predators (TOPP) program.

Conservation International embedded a Convio registration form into their partnership page on Yahoo to capture email addresses. They then launched a welcome series of emails that provided new registrants with race updates and familiarized them with other conservation efforts.

The organization also offered numerous Widgets and encouraged supporters to use them on various social networking sites, including MySpace and Care2, as well as several blogs. The Widgets helped spread the word about fundraising to support sea turtle conservation efforts. The combination of these tactics helped double the number of newsletter subscribers in just 2 weeks.

#### Benefits

- Increased visibility across multiple Web sites;
- Able to reach new demographics;
- Accelerated list growth.

## Idea #4: Build a Microsite for Annual Campaigns

Rather than making major changes to your current Web site to feature your organization's annual campaign, consider building a microsite. This approach will provide you with more design freedom, as well as an opportunity to co-brand your campaign if it involves a partner. More importantly, you can reuse the microsite each year, updating it annually to keep content and graphics fresh and engaging.



### Proof That it Works

The Larry King Cardiac Foundation (LKCF) was selected by Quaker Oatmeal to be the recipient of pledges from their annual Quaker Smart Heart Challenge. The Foundation would receive up to \$250,000 from online pledges.

However, Quaker required LKCF to drive traffic to the online campaign form and display content about preventive steps to improve heart health. These topics fell outside LKCF's mission of providing funding for people without health insurance who require cardiac procedures. Moreover, LKCF had three weeks to build and launch the campaign.

LKCF worked with Changing Our World to create a microsite with rich media, including heart disease videos featuring Larry King and scrolling heart disease facts. The microsite also features tribute campaigns, newsletter sign-ups, and online donation forms. All content and applications will be folded into LKCF's main Web site this spring when the annual campaign ends. The microsite will "go dark" until the campaign is launched again in the fall.

Within four months, the microsite has referred more than 8,000 visitors to Quaker's campaign page, resulted in donations, and increased LKCF's newsletter file size by 35%. The Quaker Oatmeal campaign has raised more than \$180,000 in pledges for the LKCF.

### Benefits

- Create small, easily-maintained sites that meet your short-term objectives;
- Meet corporate partner requirements without forcing an existing website redesign;
- Build reusable components for annual campaigns.

## Idea #5: Use Text Messaging for Real-Time Updates

If you need to provide daily, or even hourly, campaign updates to constituents, then you might want to consider using text messaging. Not only is this an efficient way to immediately communicate real-time news to supporters, but it also a preferred form of communication for many. By providing supporters with the option of receiving updates via text messaging, you can potentially increase your campaign's profile which can positively impact overall results.



### Proof That it Works

From March through April, 2007, The HSUS asked its supporters to help bring an end to the slaughter of baby seals in Canada. Thousands of existing and new HSUS supporters signed the ongoing boycott, sent messages to Canadian and U.S. government officials, and donated to the campaign with one-time gifts or monthly pledges.

In addition to the two traditional advocacy actions, the ProtectSeals homepage, and a campaign donations page, The HSUS offered members the chance to sign up for "Updates from the Ice", which consisted of text messages with the latest news on the seal hunt sent directly from an HSUS staff member on location in Canada to subscribers' cell phones worldwide.

Over 1,100 members signed up to receive mobile updates, which led to 78 new list members, and more than 500 Tell-A-Friend messages sent. The campaign resulted in nearly 10,000 donations totaling more than \$409,000, with an average gift of \$42.71. Nearly 500,000 actions were taken on the four advocacy options, with 128,766 new members joining The HSUS list.

### Benefits

- Share your news in real-time;
- Reach out to constituents in a way they prefer;
- Drive actions and donations by staying top-of-mind.



## Idea #6: Build Awareness for Special Giving Programs

Consider building awareness for special fundraising programs that may be of interest now or in the future. Many special giving opportunities, such as honor, memorial, and tribute programs, are of more interest to individuals at certain times than others. Create a marketing program that communicates to diverse audiences and draws on the power of the organizations most motivated constituents. Develop a multi-phased email marketing campaign that builds awareness blended with specific “asks”.

### Proof That it Works

The ALS Association's *Community of Hope*<sup>SM</sup> has seen a strong increase in Tribute Funds created and an increase in funds donated and public participation since its launch in November of 2006. Over the 5 month period of the awareness campaign the number of Tribute Funds with a personal page increased by 177%. These funds still continue to actively raise funds today. Donations to new and existing funds increased by more than 5 times what was raised in the previous 5 months. Charity Dynamics developed a multi-phased email marketing campaign to support the *Community of Hope*<sup>SM</sup>, and gain an audience within ALS for this new program.



### Benefits

- Use a multi-phased email approach to introduce, explain and engage members to a new fundraising tool over a defined period;
- Feature select tributes in marketing emails to demonstrate the power of the new fundraising tool; and
- Scheduled email campaigns on a rolling basis to accommodate varying launch schedules to new audiences.

## Idea #7: Use Personalization to Motivate Email Recipients

Personalization should go beyond inserting a person's name in the first line of an email. With the ability to track detailed information about constituents—from geography and interests, to previous donations and actions—there is tremendous opportunity to personalize email content to engage people and prompt increased involvement with your organization.

### Proof That it Works

After Lambda Legal redesigned its monthly newsletter in 2007, they experienced a 35% increase in readership. Each issue features breaking news stories and legal updates, an executive column, and a Q&A section managed by their legal help desk.

Personalization is taken to a new level by segmenting the organization's list, then customizing content and offers based on specific constituent information. For instance, using the geographic location of the donor, Lambda Legal publishes information about special events in the member's area. The regional news box of the newsletter has the highest click-through rate of the entire newsletter! Content is also customized based on a recipient's previous donations and membership level. Member giving has increased using targeted incentives that presents a specific cause that matters most to a member.



### Benefits

- Increase click-thru rates;
- Accelerate list growth; and
- Increase actions taken by email recipients.



## Idea #8: Have a Party!

How do you get people together to discuss an issue? Have a party!

They started growing in popularity during the 2004 elections, but House Parties have increasingly become a staple for sophisticated fundraising and communication efforts. They combine classic online communication strategies, such as mapping and viral marketing, to connect individuals' offline by encouraging them to get together at "parties" centered around a common issue or goal. Isn't it time your organization took part in the festivities?



### Proof That it Works

The Women's Funding Network (WFN) teamed up with Lifetime Television to produce an original 2-part mini series entitled "*Human Trafficking*," which took an issue WFN had been trying to abolish, and put it in the national spotlight.

With the help of McPherson Associates, WFN launched a nationwide house party event on their Web site to maximize the number of individuals tuning into the program, and to provide them with information about how to get involved with the organization.

The house parties were initially promoted through a series of five e-mails to WFN's e-mail base. Each message contained a theme, such as "save the date," or "be a party planner," and was forwarded using viral marketing techniques. Recipients were invited to either host or join a house party, where they would watch the movie, "*Human Trafficking*," and discuss the issue afterwards. Individuals were sent a link to WFN's Web site, which had a map of the US where individuals could sign-up to host a party or locate a party near them to attend. Party hosts were also given the option of keeping their location anonymous, and only allowing individuals they specifically invited to view their location. Lifetime Television also promoted the house parties on their Web site via a Web page dedicated to the film, and hosted the blog discussion after the airing where viewers could share their opinions on the film and the issue.

Party hosts were then sent a link to a "house party toolkit," which included facts and statistics about human trafficking, talking points, and ways to get involved regarding the issue, such as signing a petition. All copy was written and pre-approved by WFN in an effort to have consistent messaging associated with their brand and the issue. In the end, over 75 house parties were hosted nationwide, viewership for the film exceeded expectations and traffic to the WFN Web site tripled during that time period.

### Benefits

- Connect with individuals offline;
- Build momentum region by region; and
- Identify 'super' supporters.

## Idea #9: Optimize your Web Site's Usability

Did you know that 65% of donors who use the Internet visit the Web site of a potential recipient organization every time they give? How can you ensure that you're ready for them? Re-evaluate your Web site to ensure that it is designed with usability in mind. Make the needs of visitors a top priority, starting on the homepage. Consider a layout that drives visitors to the single, most important action. Ensure that navigation is clean and intuitive. Use images to draw attention to specific areas.



If you underestimate the importance of usability, then you're missing valuable opportunities to engage your target audience.

### Proof That it Works

Working in conjunction with Silas Partners, Precept Ministries International redefined its main online presence by replacing its brochure-style Web site with a sophisticated communication tool. The new design enables visitors to easily find what they are looking for, and engages them in meaningful ways. By segmenting content by visitor type (Pastors, Leaders, Youth), the organization can present relevant information that helps them stay connected with their valued constituents.

### Benefits

- Increase the likelihood that content will resonate with visitors;
- Encourage visitors to spend more time on your Web site; and
- Improve overall level of engagement.

## Idea #10: Consider a Clean and Simple Layout

It isn't always necessary to create complex or flashy newsletters or emails. Often, constituents are content with information that is presented clearly, in a clean and simple layout that enables them to easily find what they want. Consider revamping the layout of your regular online communications, simplifying the presentation so recipients can quickly scan the content and identify topics of interest to them.

### Proof That it Works

The Meatless Monday “Eater’s Digest” weekly newsletter, produced in association with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, offers a clean design with diverse content which appeals to a wide variety of readers. Combining news and nutritional information with easy-to-follow guides for healthy eating in a simple, two-column layout, the Meatless Monday newsletter is an attractive and easy to read publication. The digest's high click through rate is a testament to the success of making information accessible and appealing to their readers.



### Benefits

- Simplifies the design process;
- Increases click through rates; and
- Captures readers' attention while reinforcing your brand.

## Idea #11: Leverage Peer-to-Peer Campaigns

A fast, effective way to spread the word about a campaign is to put tools in the hands of your supporters. By empowering them with the ability to raise funds or encourage others to take action on behalf of your organization, you can explore new sources of funding. The personal stories of people will convey a powerful message to friends, which in turn makes your organization's issues more compelling.

### Proof That it Works

ASPCA launched tribute pages, and promoted them through email campaigns and community blogs. Then, by building a presence on MySpace and offering tribute pages through the site, ASPCA attracted 18,000 friends, referred an average of 3,000 visitors to their Web site each month, and captured an average of 175 emails off site each month. They also provided constituents with Widget downloads, which led to more than \$5,000 in donations. In addition, ASPCA has posted more than 40 videos on YouTube, and has even created its own YouTube Channel which has almost 200 subscribers as of the end of 2007.



### Benefits

- Tap into your supporters' personal networks;
- Increase list size; and
- Improve campaign results.

## Idea #12: Simplify the Issue

Some issues are inherently complex. Unfortunately, this complexity can lead to a decrease in results—when people struggle to understand the issue at hand, they are not as likely to take action.

By simplifying an issue and explaining it in clear, concise terms, you increase the likelihood of motivating an individual to participate in your campaign.

### Proof That it Works

Free Press launched the Web site [www.SavetheInternet.com](http://www.SavetheInternet.com) and posted "Independence Day" on YouTube, an engaging video which simplified their hard-to-understand issue. By clearly communicating the main points of the issue at stake, Free Press successfully encouraged people to lobby Congress, demanding that they not hand over control of the Internet to major network owners. The organization also urged supporters to write to their local papers with personal stories about how changes to telecom laws would hurt free speech on the Internet. These stories, accompanied by photos, were posted on the Web site, bringing names and faces to the people fighting for Internet freedom.



The campaign was extremely successful, with the video alone receiving hundreds of thousands of views. Of the more than 250,000 people who took action on the campaign, 225,000 of them were new constituents. The campaign averaged one hundred signers a day, and Free Press collected more than 20,000 personal stories.

### Benefits

- Increase the likelihood that an individual will take action;
- Drive campaign results and list growth;
- Extend your reach.

## Idea #13: Simplify the Issue

When trying to build or expand your online presence, it is very easy to bite off more than you can chew. Rather than potentially positioning your organization for failure with an aggressive strategy that may be difficult to support, consider a phased approach that will allow you to implement and refine various online initiatives, one at a time.

### Proof That it Works

The Trisomy 18 Foundation was eager to provide patient education, resources and support, as well as interactions with other peer parents, in a 24/7 Web-based environment. They recognized the need to execute their plan using a phased approach that would support the organization's growth, without overwhelming available resources.



One of the organization's first steps was leveraging segmentation capabilities to help define and build ecosystems of constituents, and meet their diverse needs. Then, with the execution of email campaigns that leveraged conditional content, the organization doubled its email file in just over 12 months. Next, by updating stale Web site content, the number of site visitors increased from 8,000 to 20,000+ in one year, with monthly hits exceeding 1 million. Later, by changing their online donation system to accept various forms of payment, the Foundation's online monthly donations increased from \$2,000 to \$10,000, with total donations more than tripling in one year. Finally, the organization launched an online program, "Our Child's Legacy" in March 2007, as a means of support for parents and loved ones, as well as an outlet for grieving families. The program also enabled parents to honor their children by raising money for the Foundation.

The phased implementation enabled the organization to grow its online initiatives, as well as its audience, without adding personnel.

### Benefits

- Refine and improve online initiatives;
- Expand online outreach without the burden of hiring more staff; and
- Encourage innovation and creativity.



## Idea #14: Consolidate Web Sites - Avoid Confusion, Simplify Maintenance

Creating and maintaining multiple Web sites for different audiences (e.g. members vs. non-members) can be labor intensive and can also cause confusion for individuals trying to find information about a specific topic. Consider consolidating sites into a single Web site that meets the needs of all of your target audiences.

You can always supplement your organization's Web site with a microsite that supports a specific campaign, with a target end date.



### Proof That it Works

When Jasper Design was asked to redesign the Web site of Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), they had to decide how to handle the challenge of two Web sites, each with unique branding and serving different audiences. PVA used one of the sites for the general public, whereas the other site served PVA's members—veterans of the armed forces who have experienced spinal cord injury or dysfunction.

First, using the results of a brand research project PVA conducted with its members, Jasper Design created guidelines for the use of color, the "Speedy" logo, and other visual elements that received positive feedback from constituents.

Second, Jasper Design recommended that PVA consolidate the membership site and the public site into a single site, designed using the recently developed branding guidelines. The combined site would enable PVA to reduce the overhead required to maintain two sites, allow non-members to view services available to members, minimize confusion when searching for information on PVA using a search engine, and strengthen the organization's brand.

The uniformly branded site, with its emotional appeal, resonated with both prospective donors and members. Equally as important, it also simplified the process for maintaining and adding Web site content.

### Benefits

- Decrease overhead by maintaining one site, rather than two;
- Reinforce branding (one brand is stronger than two!); and
- Convert non-members by providing them with insight into member benefits.

## Idea #15: Integrate Fundraising and Advocacy Campaigns

Immediately after a constituent takes action or makes a donation, you have their attention for a brief period. Why not use this opportunity to make another ask? Although such a two-phase ask process won't be appropriate for every campaign, it will work for some. The follow-up ask is a great way to convert activists to donors, and vice versa.

### Proof That it Works

In their campaign to fight hate crimes violence, The [Human Rights Campaign](#) (HRC) embedded fundraising asks at every opportunity possible. After a person took action, they were taken to a landing page that encouraged them to make a donation to the campaign. A similar landing page was used after a person told their friends about the campaign. A link to the campaign-specific donation page was clearly visible on the home page of HRC.org, and in the wrapper of every email advocacy alert sent out.



This comprehensive integration of the fundraising and advocacy campaigns related to fighting hate crimes had the desired effect. As a result of HRC's integrated efforts, the campaign yielded more than 400,000 actions, 370,000 letters to Congress, 40,000 phone calls; it also recruited 68,000 new e-activists, and helped raise over \$168,000. Of the 3,100 donors to the campaign, 1,500 were new donors.

### Benefits

- Convert activist to donors, and donors to activists;
- Increase response rates for both advocacy and fundraising campaigns; and
- Reinforce an important issue.

## Idea #16: Maximize Advocacy Results with an Integrated Campaign

Rarely is it enough to email constituents to notify them of an advocacy campaign. In order to garner their attention, you need to execute a multi-pronged, integrated approach to maximize the results of your advocacy efforts. By integrating a traditional online advocacy campaign with other tools, you can expand your reach and draw even more attention to your efforts.



### Proof That it Works

During the 2006 holiday season, Oxfam Day of Action launched a “Starbucks Day of Action”—an integrated advocacy campaign against the global corporation. This home-grown campaign was developed in-house and combined a traditional online eCRM advocacy campaign with an online advocacy petition, and also used Flickr to display a photo petition campaign. Oxfam America enhanced their advocacy efforts with special YouTube videos created to motivate people to take action and promote video story-telling. Finally, the organization encouraged people worldwide to tell Starbucks directly in their retail stores about how the company should commit to fair trade coffee in Ethiopia.

This innovative and integrated approach to a single advocacy campaign represented a new direction for Oxfam America and yielded the desired results—Starbucks signed a fair trade coffee agreement with the Ethiopian government shortly after the campaign was executed.

### Benefits

- Extend your reach;
- Reinforce your brand and campaign across multiple channels; and
- Increase overall campaign results.

## Idea #17: Build Your Email File with a Unique Offer

Engage email recipients by making a unique offer which appeals to their interests.

### Proof That it Works

Communication Workers of America (CWA) used this method to grow their email list from 229 names to 69,000 names in 10 months.

In September 2006, the organization launched their SpeedMatters.org campaign in an effort to bring high speed Internet access to all Americans. The key to this dramatic list growth in such a short period of time was offering site visitors the ability to test their Internet connection speed, and compare it to the national average and the average in other industrialized countries.



CWA partnered with Ookla, a company that specializes in internet connection speed tests, to build a flash speed test that lived on the Speed Matters Web site. After the speed test, users were prompted to enter their email address and zip code, both of which were fed directly into the Convio database using an API. More than 50% of the people who took the test voluntarily entered their email address and zip code.

### Benefits

- Reinforce your organization's mission;
- Provide recipients with a something of value; and
- Promote viral marketing.

## Idea #18: Use e-Cards to Entertain, Educate and Engage

Tired of sending email in the same format with variations on your message? Are your supporters feeling the same way? While branding your messages is important, adding an unexpected element like an animated e-card to a campaign can result in a dramatic increase in response rates.

### Proof That it Works

Planned Parenthood of Connecticut (PPC) worked with Firefly Partners staff to increase their online donations by 150% by adding an animated holiday card to their annual end-of-year campaign.

The first two messages and the final message in the end-of-year campaign were simple, branded emails. In contrast, the holiday card presented results of the annual program in an entertaining 30 second card designed using Flash. The card conveyed PPC's energy and enthusiasm for their work along with a sense of fun and holiday spirit.

The average click-through rate for the three other messages in the campaign was 0.54%. The e-card had a click rate of 9.19%, with a \$30.00 increase in the average donation.

### Benefits

- Highlight a variety of accomplishments or other messages;
- Drive action by using media-rich technology, rather than a static newsletter; and
- Increase views and recruit new supporters by using a still image from your card on multiple Web pages.



## Idea #19: Combine Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Tools with Personalized Emails

When combined with peer-to-peer fundraising tools, personalized emails can have a dramatic effect on constituent engagement and overall campaign results. Try to develop an integrated marketing strategy that leverages a mixture of these outreach methods to yield results that are better than what you could have achieved by launching standalone campaigns.

### Proof That it Works

In an attempt to increase participation and fundraising results for its annual Walk for Hunger, Project Bread provided registrants with tools that enabled them to raise money online, on behalf of the organization. In conjunction with this peer-to-peer fundraising strategy, Project Bread also used creative email techniques to increase participant engagement. Specifically, they launched an email series called the "Weekly Wednesdays" where Walkers could anticipate a short, mostly text email with a timely and helpful tip. Included in the footer of the email was a schedule of future emails. With the new format and schedule, "Weekly Wednesday" open rates soared as high as 46%, with click-thru rates reaching as high as 29% and unsubscribe rates dropping from approximately 6% to less than 1%.



Project Bread also launched a separate newsletter for a VIP group of constituents who had raised more than \$500. The "Heart & Sole" publication included exclusive features, event details, and discounts available only to Walkers who exceeded this fundraising threshold.

The combination of these efforts yielded a record-breaking \$3.3 million raised, with one-third of the total coming from online donations, up from 13% in previous years.

### Benefits

- Increase open rates and click-thru rates;
- Strengthen relationships with different groups of constituents; and
- Drive participation and fundraising results.



## Idea #20: Capitalize on Media Moments

Creating and capitalizing on media moments can have a dramatic impact on the outcome of an organization's fundraising and advocacy efforts. By identifying events or campaigns that will attract media coverage, you can proactively engage various outlets and draw attention to your efforts.



### Proof That it Works

The Save Darfur Coalition, with the assistance of M+R Strategic Services, made the most of media moments with celebrities, including George Clooney. By drawing the media's attention to rallies held in Washington, DC and a concert in New York City, the organization garnered significant media attention worldwide, including editorials and front-page coverage in *The New York Times*, as well as a live broadcast by CNN.

These media opportunities were combined with an integrated website, email campaigns, and blog marketing. As a result, the Save Darfur Coalition grew its list from 30,000 to more than 1,000,000 over 14 months. Donations for this same period exceed \$4,000,000!

### Benefits

- Create more buzz around your campaigns;
- Raise brand awareness; and
- Drive list growth and donations.

## Idea #21: Test Your Copy

Take advantage of the ability to easily test campaign copy before you send messages to a large group of constituents. Test two different sets of copy, and use the results to determine the best message to maximize results.

### Proof That it Works

Defenders of Wildlife increased donation rates by 29% by testing two versions of copy in an email campaign to raise funds to save America's wolves.

The first test email (top right) emphasized the safety of wolves, and mentioned a dollar-for-dollar match. This email garnered a 0.17% donation rate.

The second test email focused primarily on the matching gift campaign, and yielded a donation rate of 0.13%. The variation in copy translated to a 30% difference in response rates.

### Benefits

- Fast and cost effective;
- Easily identify copy that resonates with recipients; and
- Prompt action.



"Wolf Safety" Copy: 0.17% donation rate



"Matching Program" Copy: 0.13% donation rate

## Idea #22: Explore Creative Ways to Encourage Donations

With so many organizations vying for the attention of donors, don't forget to explore creative ways to secure a gift. Individuals often feel inspired to donate when their contribution can be linked to something tangible, like a brick engraved with someone's name, or an animal to help feed a family. Consider various options that make the most sense for your target audience of supporters.

### Proof That it Works

Operation Kindness saw an opportunity to leverage the Internet to engage existing donors and attract new ones with creative online fundraising campaigns, including memorials, honorariums, named gifts (bricks, benches, etc.), and sponsorship of a special needs animal. By offering donors a multitude of ways to contribute to the organization, Operation Kindness increased online donations more than five fold, from \$27,000 to \$155,000 within one year, and grew its list by approximately 50% in 12 months.



### Benefits

- Increase campaign results;
- Connect contributions with tangible gifts; and
- Encourage people to Tell-A-Friend about a unique fundraising campaign.

## Idea #23: Tie Your Annual Campaign to an Event or Holiday

To raise the profile of your annual campaign, consider tying it to an event or a holiday. You are more likely to capture media attention when your campaign is centered on an event that is already in the news. This approach will enable you to leverage existing buzz in a way that benefits your organization.

### Proof That it Works

Ploughshares Fund created a campaign that focused on Mother's Day. For the campaign, aptly named "Rediscover Mother's Day", the organization partnered with an online flower vendor, and ten generous moms who offered to match gifts up to a total of \$100,000. Visitors were encouraged to send an e-card that shared the Mother's Day for Peace Story, learn about the matching campaign, and give the gift of peace through a donation. The innovative and compelling campaign led to earned media in targeted national and regional markets, including CNN.com. By encouraging donors and recipients to tell a friend about "Rediscover Mother's Day", the campaign raised more than \$234,000 in just over a month, \$30,000 of which came from new donors who gave online.



### Benefits

- Raise the profile of your campaign;
- Increase the likelihood of gaining earned media; and
- Benefit from the buzz of an existing event or holiday.

## Idea #24: Build a Campaign-Centric Movement Online

By building an online campaign that provides a sense of clarity and urgency around your core issues, you can create – and maintain – the momentum for a movement that supports your organization’s work.

### Proof That it Works

As children we’re taught not to “cry wolf” – but Natural Resources Defense Council Action Fund (NRDC Action Fund) is spinning this in a new light. With wildlife and wildlands at risk, NRDC Action Fund sought to create a site that would mobilize site users around a core set of issues to make a difference and stand up united for the environment.

With trusted partners Northridge Interactive, NRDC Action Fund redesigned its Web site at [nrdcactionfund.org](http://nrdcactionfund.org) to serve as a nexus for building an environmental movement around distinct campaigns tied to the organization’s four primary priority campaigns: Wildlife, Wildlands, Oceans, and Global Warming. The new site provides a clear focus for users by creating visual priorities on the home page through primary and secondary feature callouts for legislative actions or donation appeals. The overriding campaign structure allows users to quickly and easily jump into the issues that they care about the most.



The site also creates a fun way for users to join celebrities and fellow environmentalists as Faces of the Movement. Users can add their environmental statement and photo, or select from campaign-themed avatars. Campaign-oriented e-cards also encourage viral list growth. Thousands of site visitors have since signed on to be part of a movement to mobilize America for the environment, and the organization has grown their list size by over 30,000 names since site launch.

### Benefits

- Enable clear and prioritized messaging from the organization to channel user engagement;
- Allow users to engage on the issues closest to their heart...and thus keep them engaged and active; and
- Create a sense of urgency to raise participation and response.



## Idea #25: Use Emotion to Trigger Response

For a fresh approach to year-end fundraising, why not try something that donors will relate to—like making a holiday list or new year’s resolution? By coming up with a theme that cleverly tugs at both the heartstrings and the purse strings, you can stir up potential donors’ hopes and fears—emotions that often lead to giving.

### Proof That it Works

Building on its previous success of a non-traditional direct mail appeal for year-end giving, Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy (PPMD) dove into the online fundraising world with a five-part email message series, a unique donation landing page, and on-site banners promoting the appeal. The delivery of the email messages and posting of banners were sent on key dates to support the direct mail appeal and reinforce creative that the audience would receive. To boost response, PPMD started and ended the campaign with messages to thank donors and leveraged a matching gift from its incoming Board Chair for its appeals.



Big Duck, who works closely with PPMD on its print and online communications and fundraising, developed the campaign concept and creative. In 2006, PPMD raised approximately \$185,000 through its mail appeal and online donations through its direct mail and online donations. By stepping up its efforts, PPMD raised over \$300,000 through its 2007 year-end campaign. The online series jumped from generating \$16,000 in 2006 to \$93,000 in 2007 and attracted 45% new online donors. The third email message, a heartfelt plea from the donor making the matching gift (who is also the father of a boy with Duchenne), had the highest open rate (22.60%), response rate (1.82%), and dollars raised (\$23,460). This message was also the first one donors received immediately following receipt of the direct mail appeal.

### Benefits

- Execute creative concept that triggers emotions and unifies campaign elements;
- Attract new donors using direct mail, email, and website promotion; and
- Combine channels to reinforce message and tell the same story.



## Idea #26: Package Your Product Offers for Better Response

Do you have a seemingly endless supply of relevant resources for your constituents? Have you had trouble “breaking through” to increase response on your product offers? Your constituents are likely receiving e-mail updates, appeals, and offers from as many as a dozen different nonprofit organizations. Your product offers must break through that clutter before constituents will even open your message, let alone respond. Consider offering a special product each month, maybe even build it around a theme for an upcoming holiday or special time of year. Your constituents are willing to spend money on quality products throughout the year, not just the holiday season. Consider New Year, Valentine’s Day, Spring Break, Graduation, Summer Vacation, 2008 Olympics, 2008 Election, or anything relevant to your constituents.



### Proof That it Works

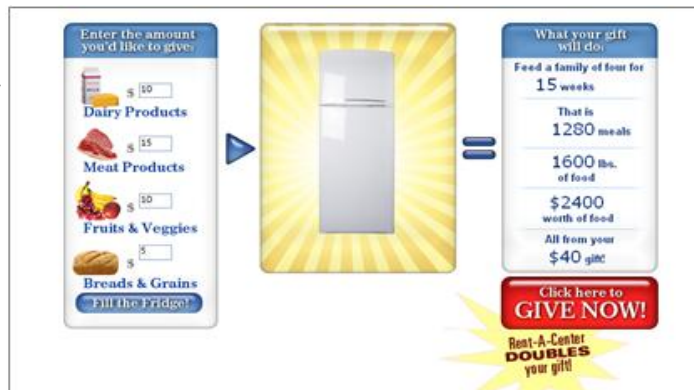
MarriageToday worked with their partner, R3 Strategies, to take advantage of the organization's unique resources and package them with their users in mind. They found a creative way to tie their current product offer to a timely holiday by producing a Valentine’s-themed package and email campaign which constituents were much more likely to open, read, and respond to. A simple A/B test provided useful data on the best subject line to use in the message. The strategy proved successful - MarriageToday more than doubled their online product sales with this simple e-mail product offer.

### Benefits

- Enjoy a significant increase in online product sales;
- Ensure your constituents acquire timely and relevant resources; and
- Leverage a viral marketing opportunity to connect with constituent's like-minded friends.

## Idea #27: Promote Donor-Directed Giving

Some individuals are more likely to make a donation when they can choose how their donation is used by your organization. Consider donor-directed giving as a way to increase constituent engagement and overall donations.



### Proof That it Works

America's Second Harvest created an innovative, donor-directed giving campaign that allowed participants to see what their donation would buy. The "Fill the Fridge" campaign prompted donors to make a donation to several food categories, including dairy products, meat products, fruit & veggies, and bread & grains. As they filled their virtual fridge, they were given interesting facts about their donation, including the number of pounds of food donated and number of meals it would provide a family of four.

This engaging campaign raised approximately \$40,000 online, with corporate partners expanding the organization's reach and matching all gifts received.

### Benefits

- Increase donations;
- Encourage viral marketing; and
- Reinforce your mission.

## Idea #28: Improve Value of Web Site Content

The amount of time an individual spends on your organization's Web site is heavily influenced by the breadth and depth of the content you make available to them. Different types of content appeal to different people. Some visitors want to read your blog, whereas others want to download your most recent podcast. Ensure that the mix of content you have available to Web site visitors is appropriate for your target audience. Offer value so that they want to stick around AND click around!



### Proof That it Works

The American Film Institute (AFI) dramatically improved the value of its Web site content by adding interactive components, such as blogs and downloads, which leveraged overall stickiness, average length of visit, and number of pages visited. AFI also drove traffic to its Web site by integrating online efforts with offline media, including TV.

Daily registration rates now remain steady at 100 users per day, and peaked at 700 users per day during the three months that followed promotions of 'AFI's 100 Years...100 Movies' 10th Edition event.

### Benefits

- Increase the amount of time visitors spend on your Web site;
- Encourage visitors to return multiple times; and
- Engage visitors in ways that appeal to them.

## Idea #29: Recruit Volunteers Online

Don't miss the opportunity to recruit volunteers for your organization's offline activities via your online efforts. Many of your supporters might be willing to pitch in and help if you simply tell them how!

### Proof That it Works

The Polly Klaas® Foundation found a cost-effective way to gain crucial citizen participation by building an active community of volunteers online. The eVolunteer recruitment



campaign enables members to download posters of missing children and display them within their local area. Now the Polly Klaas Foundation can immediately post a missing child's profile online, and instantaneously notify eVolunteers nationwide to distribute posters offline in their communities. Within 48 hours of launching the eVolunteer initiative, more than 600 people registered online!

### Benefits

- Encourage donors and activists to participate offline;
- Increase overall level of constituent engagement; and
- Grow list of members, activists, donors, and volunteers.



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