



KEEP UP THE *MOMENTUM*

USE YOUR YEAR-END FUNDRAISING TO
KICKSTART 2010

10 Strategies for Turning Your Year-End Fundraising
into Sustained Growth in the New Year

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Most organizations receive almost half of all of their annual online giving during November and December. Following this surge of activity, it's imperative to have a plan of action to appropriately engage new and existing supporters and take advantage of all of the hard work invested in year-end campaigning.

What are you doing to engage your first-time donors or volunteers? What about loyal supporters and volunteers? How are you engaging your offline donors? After the holiday giving season, it's important to maintain strong communications with your supporters and to continue email list-building activities to ensure growth of your constituent base.

10 STRATEGIES FOR TURNING YOUR YEAR-END FUNDRAISING INTO SUSTAINED GROWTH IN THE NEW YEAR

1. Capture email addresses for your offline donors.

More and more supporters are open to engaging with you online, even if they choose to donate offline. Capturing email addresses for your offline donors will allow you to implement a multi-channel approach. Use any opportunity you can to capture email addresses from your supporters such as at events, through direct mail response cards, and via telemarketing. You can do this by offering specific calls-to-action that are only available online, such as register on your website to receive a premium or to receive an “early-bird” registration for an event. You can also promote the reasons to visit your website in your offline communications, such as user-contributed photos and stories or the ability to easily update a mailing address.

2. Use a multi-channel approach if you aren't already.

Savvy organizations are adopting a multi-channel approach to convert online acquired prospects, using email first, followed-up by mail, then telemarketing to maximize conversion rates. In your direct mail, remind supporters about the ability to make their contribution online including benefits and hooks such as getting an email tax receipt, a matching gift from a major donor, being entered into a drawing. Our research shows that direct mail donors who also receive email give two times as much and renew at 10% higher rates than those just receiving email. According to a joint study by Convio and StrategicOne, “the increased value of adding an online donation and solicitation channel for donors acquired offline is \$44.71 (a 39 percent increase) per donor over 12 months.”

3. Get to know your supporters better. Due to the wide variety and diverse needs of your supporter base, segmenting constituents into appropriate groups will allow your organization to more effectively communicate relevant information to each group. Segmenting your list and then targeting groups with communications and appeals based on their interests, donation history, gender, age, length of membership or any other defining characteristic will result in higher response rates. Know who your supporters are and what they care about. Understand which donors, activists, and volunteers are most active, and devise special programs to keep them engaged. Regularly ask supporters to provide information about themselves to help you improve your segmentation and targeted messaging. Include questions in your online surveys, direct mail response cards and in sign-up sheets or surveys at events.

4. Segment your welcome messages. It's great if you have a general welcome series, but we recommend you create specific welcome series for your key supporter types. Creating “pathways” for each supporter type is key to maximizing the supporter experience on your website and for beginning to build relationships. For all of your first-time donors, you can create a welcome series to thank them for the support, communicate how their funds are being put to good use, and eventually build up to asking for their continued support year-round. After new supporters have 'graduated' from the welcome series, their names can be added to your other communications so you can further cultivate these relationships.

5. Be transparent with your communications.

To keep supporters engaged, it's important to be open and transparent in providing regular updates on how the funds you raise are being used. You can include these updates in your existing email communications and on your website. You'll make your email and website messaging much more effective and engaging by highlighting specific goals, recent successes and/or inspirational stories. If you equip your supporters with this type of information, it will give them even more reason (and confidence) to "spread the word" with others.

6. Promote a Sustainer or Pledge Giving Program.

The donors who supported you this year were likely in a position to have to be selective regarding the organizations to which they donated. It's likely these donors may be even more inclined to be loyal to you and would be open to recurring donations or paying their annual donation amount throughout the year. Sustaining and Pledge donors typically renew at rates 10-20% higher than single-gift donors. It's important to offer reasons for people to give on a recurring basis or to pledge a larger commitment that can be paid out over time.

7. Optimize your website home page. The beginning of the new year is a great time to make improvements to your home page that don't necessarily require a redesign.

- **Have strong message.** Your mission should be clearly stated on home page in 15 words or less. Surprisingly, many organizations don't clearly state what they do. Make your calls to action clear and compelling.
- **Decrease the clutter on your home page** and the length of the page to promote interactive opportunities. Move your interactive opportunities "above the fold." After users see who you are and what you do, the next thing you want for them to see are they actions you want them to take.
- **Improve your registration opportunities.** Your online relationship begins with capturing an email address. Only with a growing email list can any organization thrive online. You should use any opportunity you can to gather email addresses and then immediately communicate with these new supporters. Aim to have one or more sign-up opportunities above the fold. Make sure you have a web form on the page, not just a link or button, and have compelling reasons for your top 3 audiences to register with you. There are many effective tactics you can use to motivate online registrations, such as downloadable content, contests, drawings, eCards, polls, pledges, and premiums. In addition, you'll get a higher registration rate if you make your online registration simple. We recommend you capture email address, first name, last name and zip at most. You can ask for additional information as a second page – such as interests and to opt into other email communications.

8. Create targeted website content. Your website is your window to the world and a way that many supporters will stay informed about what your organization is doing. It's important to understand your various audiences and have content based on their needs. Presenting a compelling story, delivering useful content, and creating opportunities for engagement should be organized in a fashion that is easy for website visitors to navigate and understand. Making your website experience better will drive higher conversion rates, and keep your constituents coming back to stay in touch with your organization.

9. Make your email newsletter more engaging.

For most organizations, their email newsletter is a prospecting tool, so sending the same newsletter to everyone is not appropriate. We recommend at a minimum, having two versions – one for prospects/non-donors and one for current donors. Does your newsletter reflect that you know the recipient? Consider adding conditionalized content based on their relationship with you. Have they donated this year? Do they volunteer? Have they attended events? Have they done team event fundraising? Does your newsletter engage the reader? Have clear calls to action such as “Update Your Address”

or “Learn More” or “Share Your Story.” Make sure you have the Donate and Tell-a-Friend links above the fold.

10. Tap into the power of viral marketing. Your year-end donors have already expressed their affinity for you by donating to you in a tough economy. Leverage this support to help spread the word about your organization. When combined with an effective registration mechanism, viral campaigns targeted specifically at growing the email house file can generate impressive results. We have worked with organizations that have seen over 25% growth in their email files in as little as two weeks. The key component is that the two simultaneous objectives are to drive the viral aspect and to create the registration opportunity. In addition to specific campaigns targeted at growth in email acquisition, Tell-A-Friend links should be incorporated throughout your online programs, enabling supporters to forward web pages, emails, eCards, stories, etc. to individuals they feel would be interested. Finally, tapping into your supporters' networks is key. Provide them with personal outreach tools, such as tributes pages and widgets they can plug into their social network sites.

ABOUT CONVIO

Convio is the leading provider of on-demand constituent relationship management (CRM) software and services that give nonprofit organizations a better way to inspire and mobilize people to support their organization. Convio Online Marketing, the company's online marketing suite, offers integrated software for fundraising, advocacy, events, email marketing and web content management, and its Convio Common Ground™ CRM system helps organizations efficiently track and manage all interactions with supporters. All Convio products are delivered through the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model and are backed by a portfolio of best-in-class consulting and support services and a network of partners who provide value added services and applications focused on the unique needs of nonprofit organizations. For more information, please visit www.convio.com.

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