



HOW TO USE DIRECT MARKETING FOR FUNDRAISING

Do you have a marketing strategy? How are you planning to build enthusiasm with your current donors and engage new ones? It's important to develop a strong message and to continue to work on growing your donor base whether from internal list building efforts or by using the services of a list broker. Here are a few ways to help you ensure your fundraising efforts pay off.

DIRECT MAIL MARKETING

Direct mail has always been the tried and true method of garnering support. Even with the rise of online fundraising and social media, direct mail still produces results. To make your mail piece more relevant in today's digital age, create pieces that encourage donors to 'like' and 'follow' you on your social media pages, provide links to your website and ask donors to give online. Provide them with the benefits of going online, like the convenience of online donations. You can even offer additional incentives like matching donations from major donors, or a drawing or giveaway. According to a recent study the increased value of adding an online solicitation channel for donors acquired offline is \$44.71 (a 39% increase) per donor over 12 months.

TELEMARKETING

Just like direct mail, telemarketing is continuing to evolve and prosper. Telemarketing is an immediate and intimate way to build awareness for your non-profit organization, especially to prospective supporters who have a specific area that they care about and were unaware of your cause. The phone also provides those donors who can't find the time or have simply forgotten with an easy way to make their donation. The key to effective telephone fundraising is using skilled fundraisers on the phones and the development of a good strong script.

EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing can help your organization create awareness and encourage a loyal, involved support base. This helps fundraising efforts but it can also encourage activism and volunteerism. The key to soliciting support through email marketing is having a professional looking creative. You'll get a higher click through rate by keeping the words to a minimum and making use of images and links.

Have someone look at your creative for 5 seconds. Close it and have them write down what they remember. Effective email campaigns should tell recipients within seconds of being opened:

1. Who you are
2. Why they should care
3. How they can help

USE A MULTI-CHANNEL APPROACH

Many non-profit organizations are starting to realize they can't just focus on one form of marketing over another. You stick with direct mail and you might miss out on the next generation of donors. You go strictly online and you risk snubbing the baby boomers who prefer mail. The way around this is to adopt a multi-channel approach and attract donors of all ages and creeds.

Start with an email campaign first, followed by a mail piece, and then a phone call. This gives your prospective donors a variety of ways to respond and it will maximize your response rates. 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.

GET TO KNOW YOUR EXISTING DONORS BETTER

Segmenting your existing donor list into appropriate groups will allow your organization to communicate relevant information to each group. By sending appeals to donor groups based on their interests, donation history, gender, age or length of membership you will get higher response rates. Know who your donors are and what they care about. Learn which group of donors and volunteers are most active, and create special programs to keep them engaged. Regularly ask donors for 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.

This donor information will also help should you decide to supplement your existing list through list acquisition. Look at your current donors and search for commonalities. The more you know about your donors, the better you will be able to determine the type of people who would want to support your cause.

REALLY PERSONALIZE YOUR APPEAL

Using the donor's first name is a great way to personalizing your appeal. But how about creating a specific appeal message for your donor groups based on donation history or length of membership. Creating personalized messages for each donor group is key to maximizing the supporter experience and to further cultivate the relationship. For your first-time donors, you can create a simple welcome message to thank them for their donations. After new donors have shown continued support, their names can be added to other communications updating them on how their funds are being put to good use, you can also provide them with other ways they can show support. This keeps your audience engaged and your organization front of mind.

SEND UPDATES, NOT JUST APPEALS

Don't limit your communications to just appeals. If every time your donors hear from you and you have your hand out, you will lose your audience. To keep donors engaged, it's important to provide updates on how their donations help and what your future goals are; the more specific you can get, the better. You can include these updates in your existing email campaigns or send a simple personalized letter. You can make your fundraising campaigns much more effective and engaging by sharing your organization's recent successes and inspirational stories. By providing this type of information, it will give your supporters even more reason to share their passion with others.

CREATE COMPELLING AND TARGETED WEBSITE CONTENT

Your website is quickly becoming the primary way many supporters stay informed about what your organization is doing. Make sure it speaks to them — offer content based on the needs and interests of your various audiences. It's important to understand your donor base and have content tailored to their needs. Presenting a complete story and captivating images, delivering useful content, and creating opportunities for engagement should be organized in a way that is easy for your site's visitors to navigate and understand. Making your website experience better will result in higher conversion rates, and keep your supporters coming back to stay updated with your organization's goings on.

OPTIMIZE YOUR LANDING PAGES

Landing pages aren't just limited to email communications. You can send out direct mail pieces with landing pages printed on them for donors to manually type into their browsers or you can utilize QR technology. Using their smart phone, donors just point and click! It has never been easier to send donors to a landing page.

When sending out your direct mail pieces and email messages, make sure the links take your donors to a strong landing page with a clear call to action. You can keep it simple and have only 1 landing page that takes your donors to your home page or you can have a couple of landing pages personalized based on communication preference or donation history that will take the donor customized call to action. Either way you do it, make sure your landing pages:

- Have a strong message. Your mission statement should be clearly stated. Surprisingly, many organizations don't say what they do or why they're doing it.
- Decrease the clutter and length on your landing pages to promote engagement opportunities. After you tell your donors who you are and what you do, be clear about the actions you want them to take. Make your calls to action clear and compelling.
- Always provide registration opportunities. Your relationship begins with capturing prospective donors' interest and you should use any opportunity you can to get their email addresses so you can cultivate that relationship. Once you have captured an interested donor's email you can start to communicate with these new supporters immediately.

Successful fundraising is built on the basis of testing and measuring. All non-profit organizations are not created equal; what works for one may not work for you. So test some or all of the mentioned suggestions and go with what works.

And remember, never stop researching your donor base. Your marketing strategy should always be evolving to meet the needs of your donors. You might discover a distinct shift in who your donors or how they are reaching out to you. By recognizing these changes you will be able to adapt your marketing strategy accordingly and fundraise more effectively.

We provide thousands of top quality marketing lists to organizations just like yours. Our success hasn't been built on a single project, but on the long term relationships we have developed by supplying quality direct marketing lists to companies throughout Canada and the US and within International markets.

We look forward to the opportunity to speak with you to discuss your list requirements and to develop a new and long-term relationship.