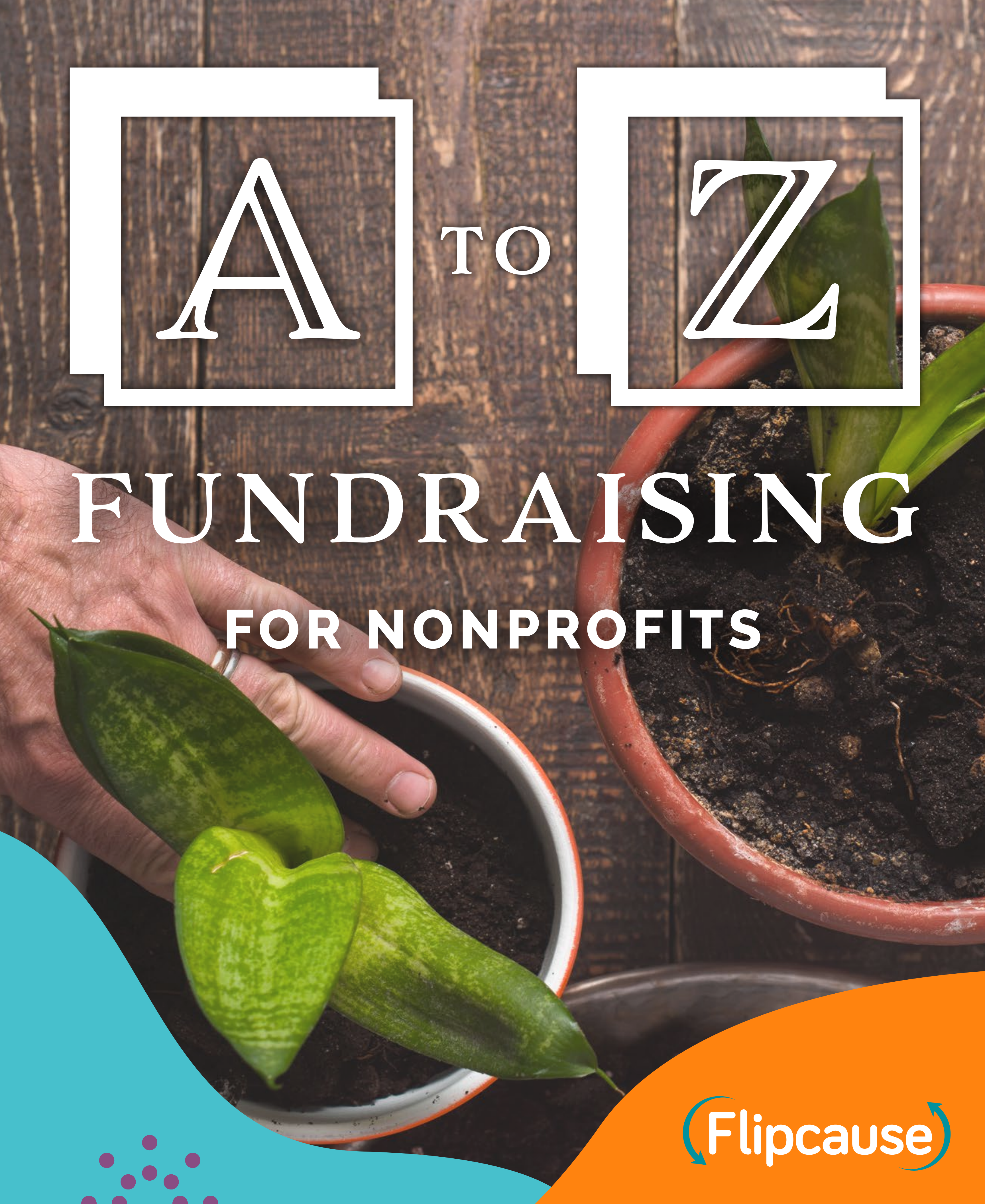
A to Z Fundraising

for Nonprofits



Flipcause

A TO Z FUNDRAISING FOR NONPROFITS

What's inside?

This ebook is made up of simple building blocks to help you develop a successful fundraising strategy.

When you're new to fundraising, you quickly realize that there's a lot to learn. Rather than feeling overwhelmed, we hope you'll enjoy the process of discovery.

A to Z Fundraising for Nonprofits is designed to make you feel comfortable with basic fundraising concepts.

It's not meant to be read all at once, though you certainly can. The navigation on the next page lets you easily click through and explore different ideas and best practices.

AUTHENTICITY

What makes you different from the other 1.6 million nonprofits in the U.S.? You serve a distinct community in unique ways. You come up with creative solutions to make the world a better place. And there's no other nonprofit out there doing it quite like you.

As you build your nonprofit's brand, striving for authenticity will help you establish a foundation of trust and build stronger relationships with your supporters. Authenticity is at the heart of all successful relationships—and all successful fundraising, too.

So what does it mean to be authentic?

Know who you are.

Take the time to articulate and share a set of values that truly define who you are as an organization. Avoid the mistake of trying to be for—and raise money from—everyone. The most important support will come from people who already share your values. By keeping your mission front and center in all of your fundraising efforts, you can build a community of donors who share your vision.

Find your voice.

It's easy to ignore generic appeals that sound like they could've come from anyone. Luckily, your nonprofit has a unique perspective on the issues that your community cares about. Why do your programs run the way they do? How do you offer an unusual or unexpected solution to a problem that people think they already understand? When you "speak" to your supporters, use a consistent tone that relays this special understanding to make them feel like they're partners in your mission.

When you need something—ask!

Sharing your unique insights will inspire trust and action. With strong relationships in place, you'll be ready to ask for donations, recruit volunteers, and better serve your community.

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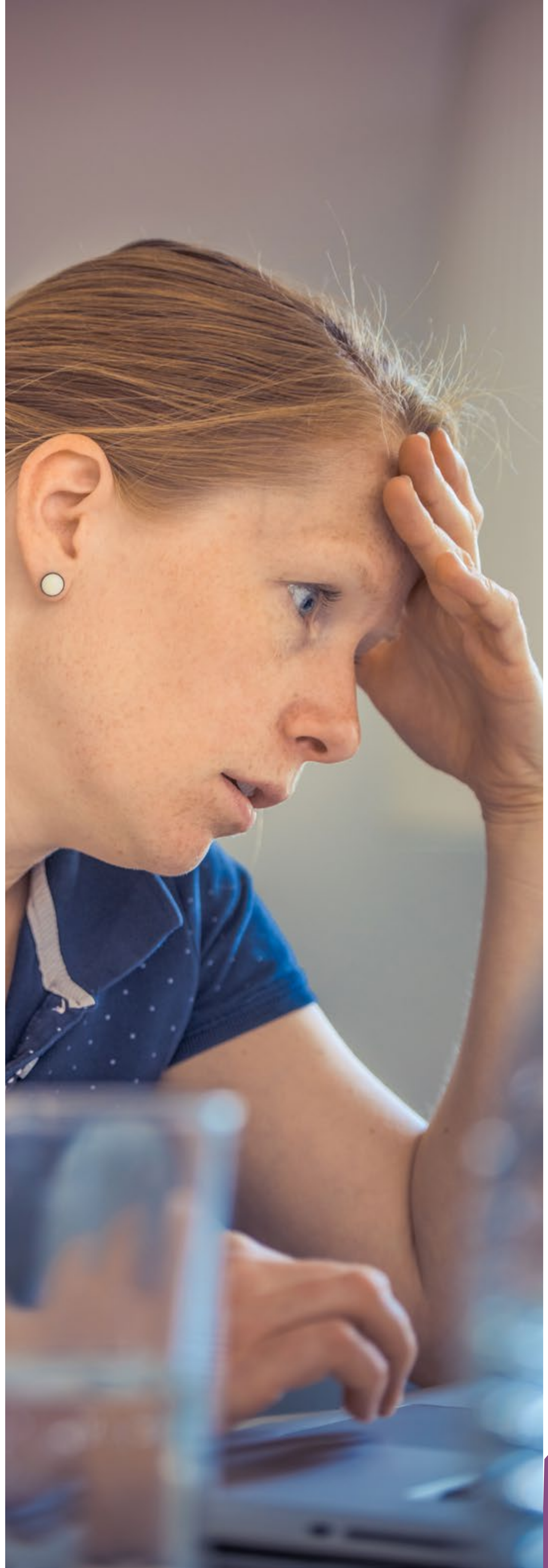
B

BURNED-OUT DONORS

Donor burnout happens when you've exhausted your supporters.
Once they feel burned out emotionally or financially, donors will stop giving to your cause. Keeping this from happening can feel like a balancing act: with the increase in online fundraising—from crowdfunding to peer-to-peer campaigns—most people's inboxes and Facebook feeds are overloaded with donation requests. At the same time, being fearful of asking for too much can mean you don't get the resources you need.

Luckily, there are a few things you can do to avoid the dreaded donor burnout:



Nurture your donors.
You can cultivate strong relationships by always giving donors timely and heartfelt thanks for their contributions. Show them the real-world impact of their first contribution to make them more likely to open future appeals (and give a second or third time). Let them know what impact their gift had on your mission and stay in touch with regular communications. They'll feel great when you engage them with future appeals!

Be specific with your appeals.
Creating campaigns with specific and measurable goals is one of the best ways to make donors feel confident about giving.

Nurtured donors typically designate gifts to a particular program, service, or project that is measurable and tangible.

Make sure your fundraising appeals include a clear and tangible goal. You should also avoid sending the same generic appeal to the same donor multiple times.

Instead, personalize your follow-up and appeal messages to to recognize existing donors' past contributions.

Offer supporters multiple ways to engage with your organization.
It's also a good idea to go beyond the donate button and give supporters other ways to get involved with your cause.

Donors only feel burned out when giving is a one-way street or when they are asked for the same thing over and over.

In general, you'll want to keep these strategies in mind as you create fundraising initiatives and build your donor base. Making the right kind of asks and maintaining healthy relationships will keep your donors engaged and more likely to give long-term.

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C

CALL-TO-ACTION (CTA)

All good fundraising campaigns include a clearly articulated call-to-action (CTA). Your campaigns are driven by a need for people to take action, whether it's to volunteer, donate, sign a petition, subscribe, or otherwise get involved in your cause. Making this kind of ask is a vital moment for an organization, so a persuasive CTA is important.

Keep the following attributes in mind to make your CTA resonate more deeply with supporters:

Be specific.
Your campaign messaging should tell donors why you're fundraising and make them feel connected to your mission. When it comes down to the ask, being specific is key. Your CTA should tell your supporters exactly what to do and why. If they donate, will five children receive school lunches? If they volunteer, will they help a particular community overcome a barrier to success? You want your supporters to know how their specific actions will produce concrete results.

Be feasible.
Focus on small wins over big expectations. Large or unrealistic goals can overwhelm supporters. Choose a simple action for your CTA to make success attainable. It's better to have a smaller goal that everyone can feel good about achieving.

Think beyond getting donations.
Keep in mind that not everyone is ready to donate right away and it's important to give them other ways to participate. Since donations themselves are a means to an end, you should always have a priority beyond the dollar. Focus on how you can build a community of potential supporters, and use your CTA to create relationships with those people. Hosting casual meetups, throwing events, recruiting volunteers, and selling goods or services related to your organization are all great ways to expand opportunities for engagement.

Be barrier-free.
Respect your supporters' time by making it easy for them to take action. You can remove barriers by putting yourself in their shoes: watch someone who is unfamiliar with your website and donation process go through the steps to complete your CTA. Pay attention to where they get hung up, any unnecessary steps, and make sure that everything is easy to understand.

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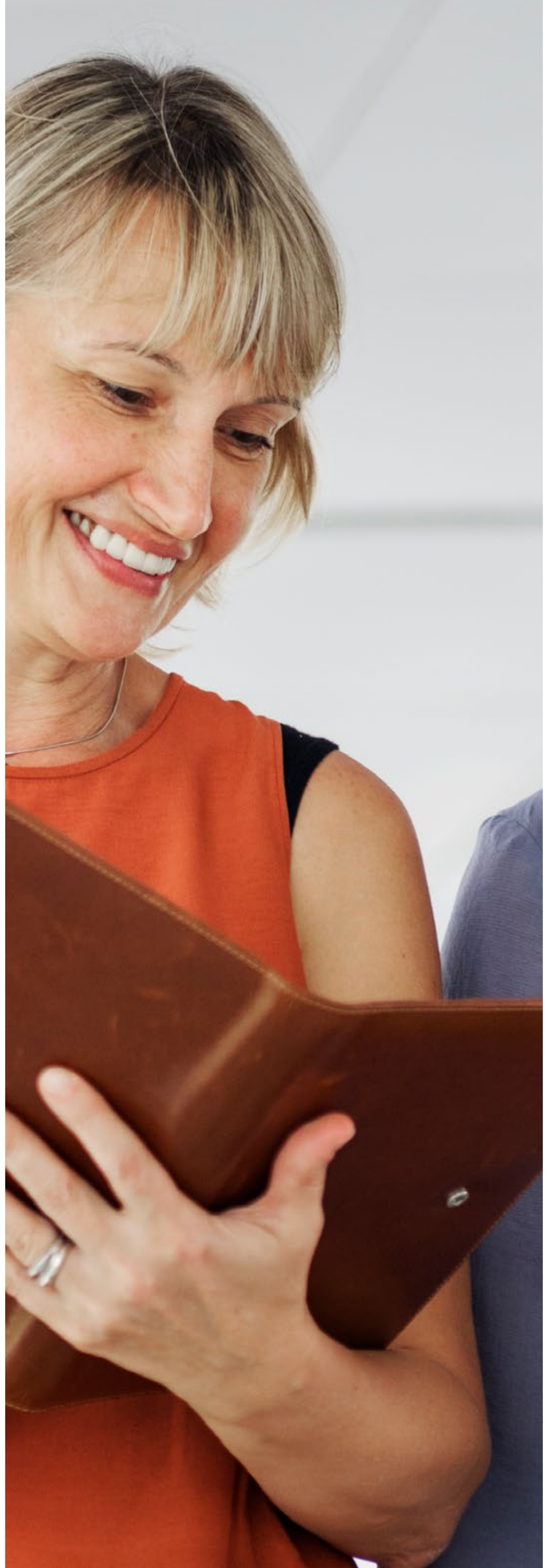
D

DONOR DATA

When it comes to data, it's not just about what you have—it's about what you do with it. Measurement only matters when it changes the way you act. Although it can be straightforward to gather, data tells you nothing by itself.

Luckily, the following best practices can help you collect, understand and utilize your donor data:



Start with simple data about your donors.

You'll always want to have a record of who contributed to each campaign, when they did, and how much they gave (whether in dollars, time, or otherwise). Ideally, you'll also collect their contact information and stay in touch.

Spreadsheets can be an easy way to gather this information, but as your donor base grows you'll need to find a nonprofit CRM (also known as a database) to help manage your data.

Actively manage your donor data.

Over time, data systems can start to look like the junk drawer in your kitchen. To avoid a mess of information that's hard to work with, create systems for collecting data and keeping it in order. Teach your staff and volunteers how to manage donor data and make it a regular habit to clear out unnecessary information from your donor database.

Attach basic metrics to bigger, more meaningful metrics.

Easy-to-measure data is important, but if your basic data isn't attached to something bigger, then knowing that information isn't helpful. So...

Use donor data to build a campaign snapshot.

At the conclusion of any fundraising campaign, you'll want to look at your related donor data as a whole. How many people contributed? How much money did you raise? Did you meet or exceed your goal? This information can help you understand what did or didn't work and help you improve your fundraising efforts in the future.

However, this isn't the last step! You'll also want to use data to show how these contributions advance your mission.

Use campaign data to articulate impact.

Donor data is useful on its own, but the most meaningful metrics are about impact. What programs are made possible as a result of specific donations? How do donors create change and build a better world?

At this point, you'll want to connect your donor data with your program data. While measuring program impact is its own discipline, you can think in simple terms about the **outputs** made possible through a particular campaign. These are generally things that can be counted: # of courses offered, # of items distributed, or # of people reached. You should also strive to articulate the **outcomes**, which are the results of your efforts. For example, take a donor who contributed to a campaign to fund a summer youth program. Attaching their donation data to program metrics is how you explain that their contribution helped a certain number of students attend (the output) and build stronger self-confidence (the outcome).

By being intentional about your donor data from the beginning, you'll have key information at your fingertips to build stronger campaign messaging and relationships in the long run.

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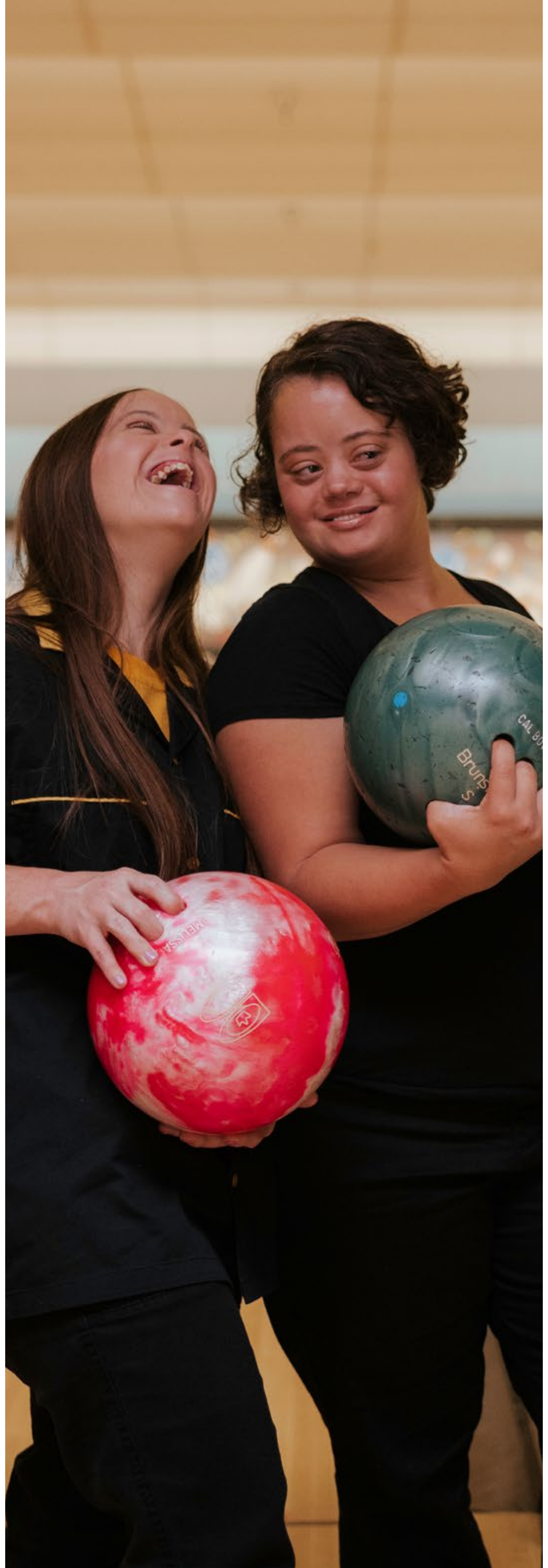
E

EVENTS

Ah, the fundraising event. Although fundraising events are a great way to earn money, create brand awareness, and build one-on-one connections, running an in-person fundraiser is a lot of work. Successful events depend on having the right skills, the appropriate resources for management and planning, and the ability to market the event effectively to your target audience.

To create a successful event, there are important steps to take. You want to:



Ask yourself questions.

Do you have the time and resources to plan a successful event? It's always more work than you think it will be. If yes, you also need to decide who your attendees will be and determine the best location to host the event. What will your budget be? And what can you get donated?

You might even want to consider corporate sponsorship.

Set one overarching goal.

Keep in mind that your event should be a strategic part of your overall fundraising plan. Events are a great way to recruit volunteers, show donor appreciation, or even launch a monthly giving program. Be clear on your goal from the beginning!

Define metrics for success.

How will you and your team know if the event was a success? Setting a goal, like recruiting a certain number of recurring donors, will help you answer that question.

Other things to keep in mind for your fundraising event:

Aim to create a positive culture for the event.

Prepare as much as you can ahead of time, but be ready to take surprises in stride. Be ready to have a good time even if everything doesn't go as planned—because it almost certainly won't. Your staff and volunteers will set the tone for everyone else!

After you send an invite, follow up regularly until you receive a response.

(Don't worry—it's tenacious, not annoying!)

When it's all over, don't forget to say "Thank You" to your attendees—and say it often!

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F

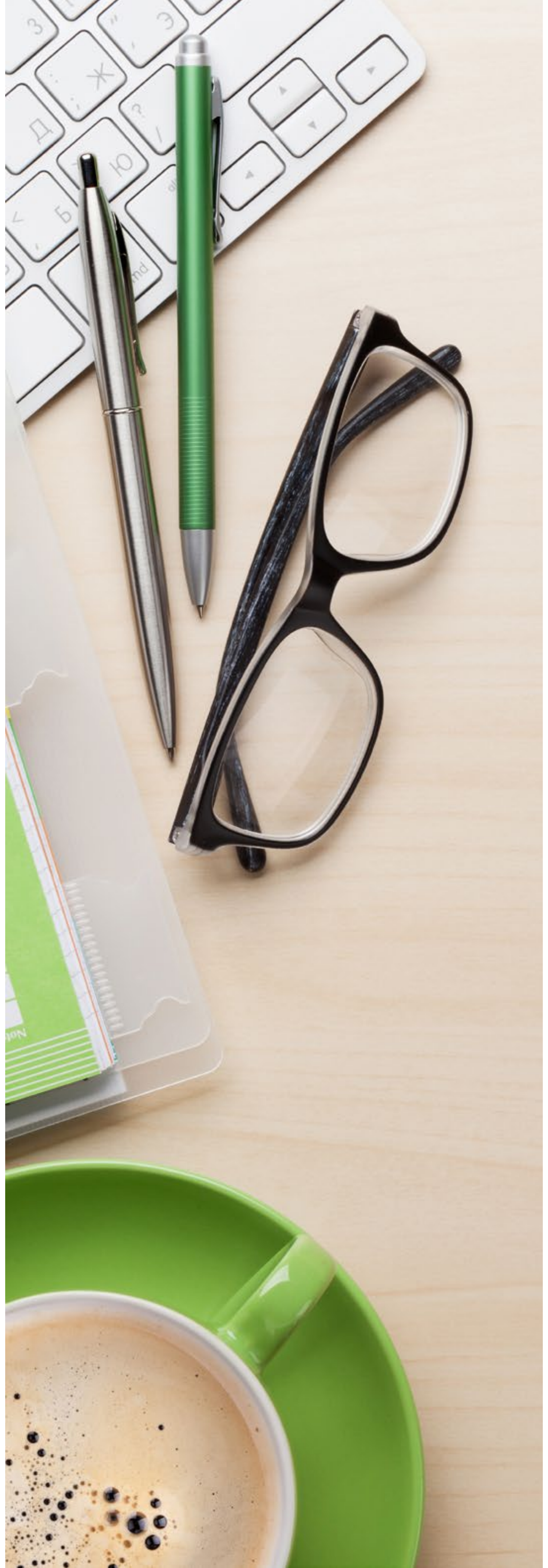
FUNDRAISING PLAN

Creating a fundraising plan is often the single most important factor in fundraising success.

Planning is a process. It's all about good communication, so your fundraising plan should change and grow as you find out what's working in your community.

Luckily, it's never too late to start planning. And you should never be afraid to scrap your plans and start over if they're not working.

To make your first fundraising plan or revamp an existing one, here are steps you should follow:



Form a fundraising team.

Your team should be a committed group of people from different backgrounds who possess a variety of skills. Not everyone should have a background in fundraising—some people can just be willing to help. Enlist a few outgoing personalities with broad social connections, a good writer, someone with a background in finance, someone who would be a good cheerleader for your project, and a strong leader with good management skills. Depending on the size of your organization, one person may need to take on multiple roles —or all of them.

Prepare a budget and goal.

Analyze past fundraising efforts and program needs to prepare your budget. Think about the fundraising strategies you'll use to build support from individual donors (acquiring new donors, retaining current donors, and upgrading donors). You should also hammer out the details for campaign expenses like technology, travel, food, design, printing, and other costs. Finally, set a fundraising goal that reflects your program needs.

Prepare a fundraising schedule.

List the strategy, goal, target audience, description, roles, and costs for each campaign. Each deliverable should have a date on your calendar. Establishing deadlines will create a sense of urgency, demanding focus from your board and staff. When setting your deadlines, you'll want to consider the turnaround time for grants, any special materials, and take note of holidays and school breaks.

To make it easier to stick to your schedule, it's best to put the most labor-intensive projects at the beginning of the year, and the least labor-intensive projects at the end of the year.

Organize a thank-you system.

Donor recognition is so, so important. Before you launch your campaign, make time to plan how you'll thank your donors.

You can give them something related to the campaign or send them a handwritten thank-you note. Either way, you'll want to have a plan in place before your campaign goes live.

Designate one or more team members to be responsible for sending out those thank-yous to every donor in a timely matter to build strong relationships from the very beginning.

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GRANTS

Writing a successful grant proposal can be a daunting task, especially when critical funding for your programs is at stake. Here are some essential tips that will improve your grant proposals and increase your chances of receiving funding.

When preparing your grant proposal:

Describe the need that your program or project will satisfy in the community.

Differentiate your organization's work from others'.

Explain how the grant will make a difference in the community.

To improve your proposal:

Eliminate jargon.
Just because you understand it doesn't mean that the funder will. Avoid vague claims, trendy language, and obscure terms. Your story should be simple and from the heart.

Get an outside perspective.
If someone who doesn't know anything about your nonprofit can understand your proposal and be inspired, then it's probably a good proposal!

Focus more on solutions than problems.
Your proposal should demonstrate that you're familiar with the issues you're dealing with but focus, in specific detail, on how you plan to solve those issues. Don't explain problems and provide general solutions. It's important to be as specific as possible about how your approach addresses a particular issue in the community.

Accurately and logically explain your budget.
If your budget doesn't add up in your proposal, or if it doesn't support the proposal's narrative, then the funder may question your credibility.

Don't repeat exact phrases from the funder's guidelines.
While all proposals should follow the funder's guidelines, it's your job to explain exactly how your work fits those guidelines.

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H

HONESTY

When it comes to fundraising, honesty is always the best policy. And it's not just about how you communicate with your donors! Cultivating a culture of honesty can help maintain mission-driven programming, keep staff energized, and ensure that fundraising efforts reach their full potential.

That's why it's important to:

Be honest with others.

Remember, anyone can look up your credentials and business information online. Even if you're a small nonprofit organization and haven't been around for very long, use transparency as an asset. While it may be tempting to overstate your impact, trust that the real impact of your programming is enough to inspire others to support you. Honesty is also the best insurance policy!

Be honest with yourself and your staff.

Honesty breeds confidence, trust, and efficiency in your work. While it sounds straightforward, you should make sure to ask yourself:

Are you taking the easy way out?

You might be tempted to jump on the bandwagon of other popular causes to reach more people. If you find that you're shifting priorities to try to get extra donations (a phenomenon called **mission drift**), take time to refocus your efforts on an audience whose values already align with your existing goals. Being honest about your priorities will build a sustainable base of support.

Do you need outside help?

Although it may be hard, it's important to admit your weaknesses. It's okay to seek outside help to run projects more efficiently. Additional support may come from board members or volunteers; you might even take advantage of pro bono services offered through networks like the Taproot Foundation or Catchafire.

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I

IN-KIND DONATIONS

In-kind donations are contributions of goods and services that are of value to nonprofits. Unfortunately, by law, nonprofit organizations cannot provide the dollar value of an in-kind gift to a donor, nor are volunteers allowed a tax break for contributing their time and services to your nonprofit. Only the out-of-pocket expenses for which donors have receipts are tax-deductible. Therefore, donors of in-kind gifts may hold your organization in high regard, and it's important to express your gratitude for these gifts in a meaningful way.

To adequately convey your appreciation for these gifts, you can:

Acknowledge
the donor(s) of an in-kind donation with a thank-you by describing the gift's practical value to your organization.

Publicly recognize
in-kind donations (with your donors' consent) in your annual reports and other publications by listing their names in a special section.

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J

THE JONES' EFFECT

You know the Jones'. They're the family that has it all. They buy the latest and greatest of everything—and all the neighbors are jealous. Everyone wants what the Jones' have. Since greed can be a very powerful factor when it comes to purchasing products and services, the more people who buy a product, the more that product appears to be credible and desirable to those who don't have it. Thus, the "Jones' Effect" is a term that refers to the leveraging of what others (the Jones') are doing to motivate potential buyers to purchase a product.

So, how can thinking about the Jones' benefit your nonprofit?

Provide great testimonials.
If people are raving about your organization, cause, mission, staff, etc., then being engaged in your work will seem more appealing and more people will want to contribute to the difference that your organization is making.

Utilize referral traffic.
The best way to use the Jones' effect is with someone who the potential donor knows. If a trusted friend or family member of a potential donor is involved with your organization, that can motivate them to participate much more than just telling them that Joe Schmo thinks your organization is great. While you won't always be able to refer them to someone they know, you can still use an example of someone relevant to them in order to make the Effect as personal as possible.

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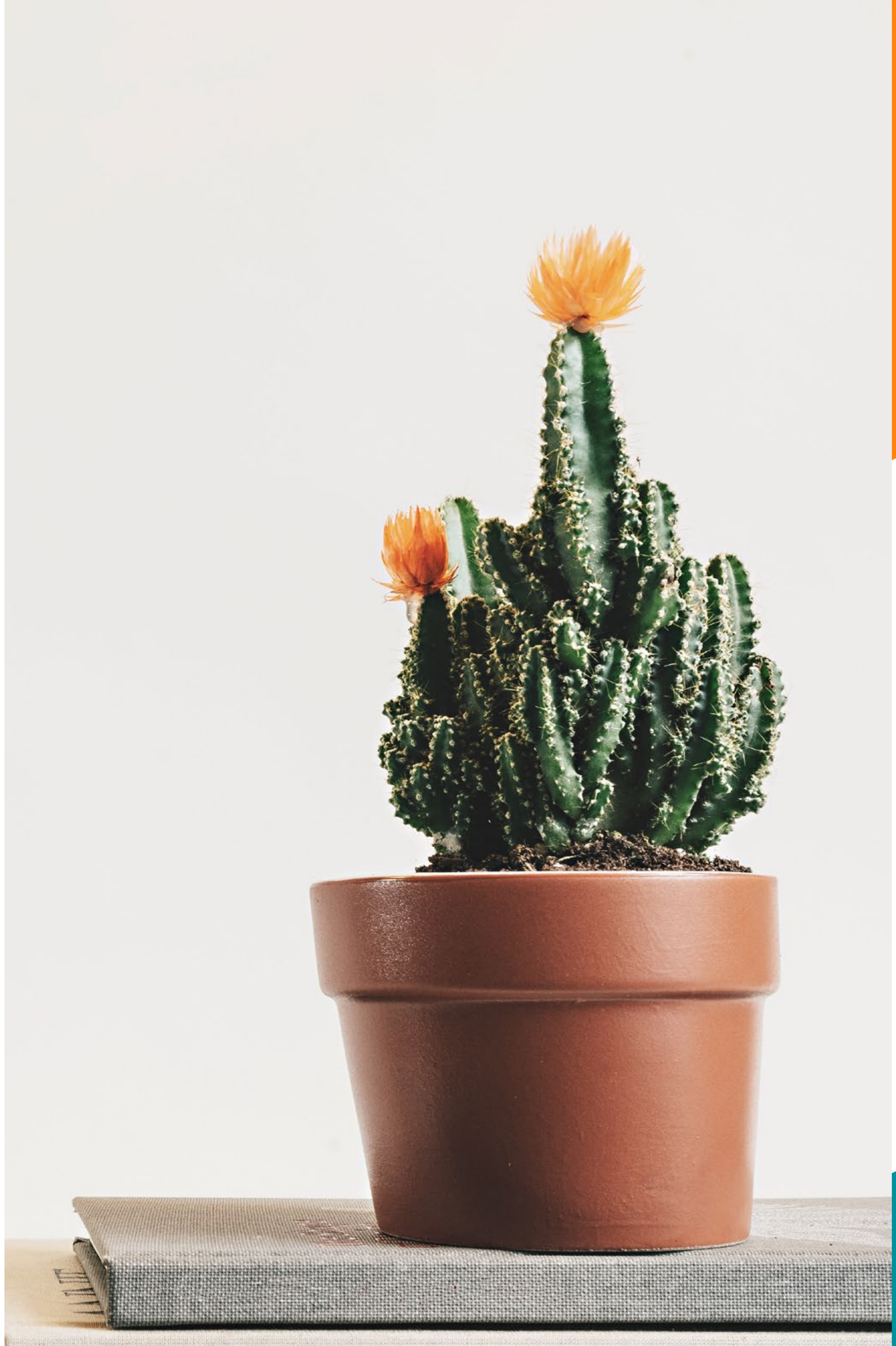
K

KEEP IT SIMPLE

It's no surprise that the best ideas and strategies can be explained simply. With an abundance of information at everyone's disposal, you should always aim to, "Keep it simple, stupid" (KISS). The KISS acronym was reportedly coined by Kelly Johnson (a lead engineer for military aircraft) and used as a design principle for the U.S. Navy in 1960. The main principle—that simple systems work best—is also applicable to nonprofit communications.



K.I.S.S

Think about it: your organization can only do great things if people understand what you're doing and what you expect from them. The more straightforward your content, mission statement, campaign ideas, website navigation, and donation tools are, the easier it will be for people to engage with your organization. But don't get confused: simplicity doesn't equate to laziness. Your organization can continue to set ambitious goals and fulfill your mission, but you'll want to convey your vision in a way that's easy to understand. This takes time, effort, and practice to do well!

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LISTEN

Sometimes we get so focused on our work that we forget to listen to what our donors want and need.

Donors don't want to hear a sales pitch over and over again; they want to feel like they're contributing to something bigger than themselves. So, if you notice yourself talking to a donor about your programs and your work, refocus the conversation around them and listen carefully.

Listen to obtain information.
Ask your donors about their needs, plans, interests, and passions to better understand who they are and what will satisfy them. This will help you find points of connection between your organization's work and their own ambitions.

Listen for enjoyment.
Your conversation doesn't necessarily have to be related to your nonprofit! Connect with people as people, not just as donors. They'll appreciate you taking the time to listen to their personal stories.

Listen to learn.
As a nonprofit, you have the opportunity to engage with people from all different walks of life. Having an open mind and desire to learn from others will create special bonds between you and your donors, strengthen your relationships, and make it possible for them to share valuable (and sometimes unexpected) insights.

Ask for feedback, and use it.
Ask your donors for their input on your initiatives and campaigns—and make a point to use it. Treat them like partners in your mission, and share "insider" details about what worked and what didn't.

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M

MOBILE

Mobile visitors accounted for 40% of nonprofit website traffic in 2017 according to the latest M+R Benchmarks Study. And that number continues to grow. As more people shift from a traditional desktop computer to mobile, you'll want to make sure that your nonprofit has a strategy in place to embrace the change. This means optimizing your content for mobile.

To create the best experience for your supporters on mobile, make sure you have:

A mobile-optimized website.

Your website navigation menu should be easy to find and use. This will allow mobile visitors to easily learn more about your programs, find upcoming events with dates, and support your work. Your website should also be **responsive**, which means it automatically resizes to display on different screens.

A mobile-friendly donate page.

Make it simple for supporters to take action from their phones. Your donate button should be big enough to read and click, and the forms should be readable on a smaller display.

Opportunities for monthly micro-donations.

Millennial donors are more inclined to give via mobile but often contribute smaller amounts. You can engage those who might not think they have enough to give by asking for small monthly contributions of $3.00 - $5.00, or **micro-donations**, which can add up to a significant amount over time.

Designed your emails with mobile users in mind.

Almost 50% of emails are read on mobile devices. Include a well-placed CTA that falls "above the fold" when supporters open your email on their mobile device. Remember: even if you're designing content on a desktop computer, always preview it in mobile view, too.

In general, a simple and streamlined design that communicates a clear call to action wins on mobile.

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NARRATIVE

A compelling narrative can transform your fundraising appeal. Narrative is all about quality over quantity, and [telling a single story] can help you raise more money and bring your donors' impact to life.

When marketing your organization and reaching out to donors, use relatable stories to inspire people—and remind them why they made your cause their cause in the first place. Here's how you can create and share inspiring narratives:

Use the right amount of emotion.

A few years ago, neuroscientist Antonio Damasio studied people with damage in the part of the brain where emotions are generated. His findings support the claim that decision making is predominantly emotional, not logical. By appealing to the emotions of your supporters, you'll allow them to build a stronger connection to your cause. This emotional connection will make them more likely to believe in what you're doing and take action.

Of course, it's important to note that overdoing your emotional appeal can turn potential donors away. You can make sure your stories create emotional-fulfillment (and not emotional overload) by emphasizing solutions, rather than problems.

Tell a real story.

Storytelling is essential for nonprofit communication, and an inspiring story gives your supporters a reason to believe in your cause. For a story to be worth sharing, it should be both relevant and real. Rather than focusing on stories about your organization, think about the people who are impacted by your work. For example, if your last fundraiser allowed your organization to build a house for a family in need, tell that family's story.

Show the impact.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. In addition to storytelling, you can show your donors the difference that their contributions make. Take photos of your organization in action, or create infographics about fundraisers and share these visuals with donors via email, social media, and your website. You can even personalize your snail mail communications with a classic photo print to illustrate the impact of your donors' contributions. After all, seeing is believing.

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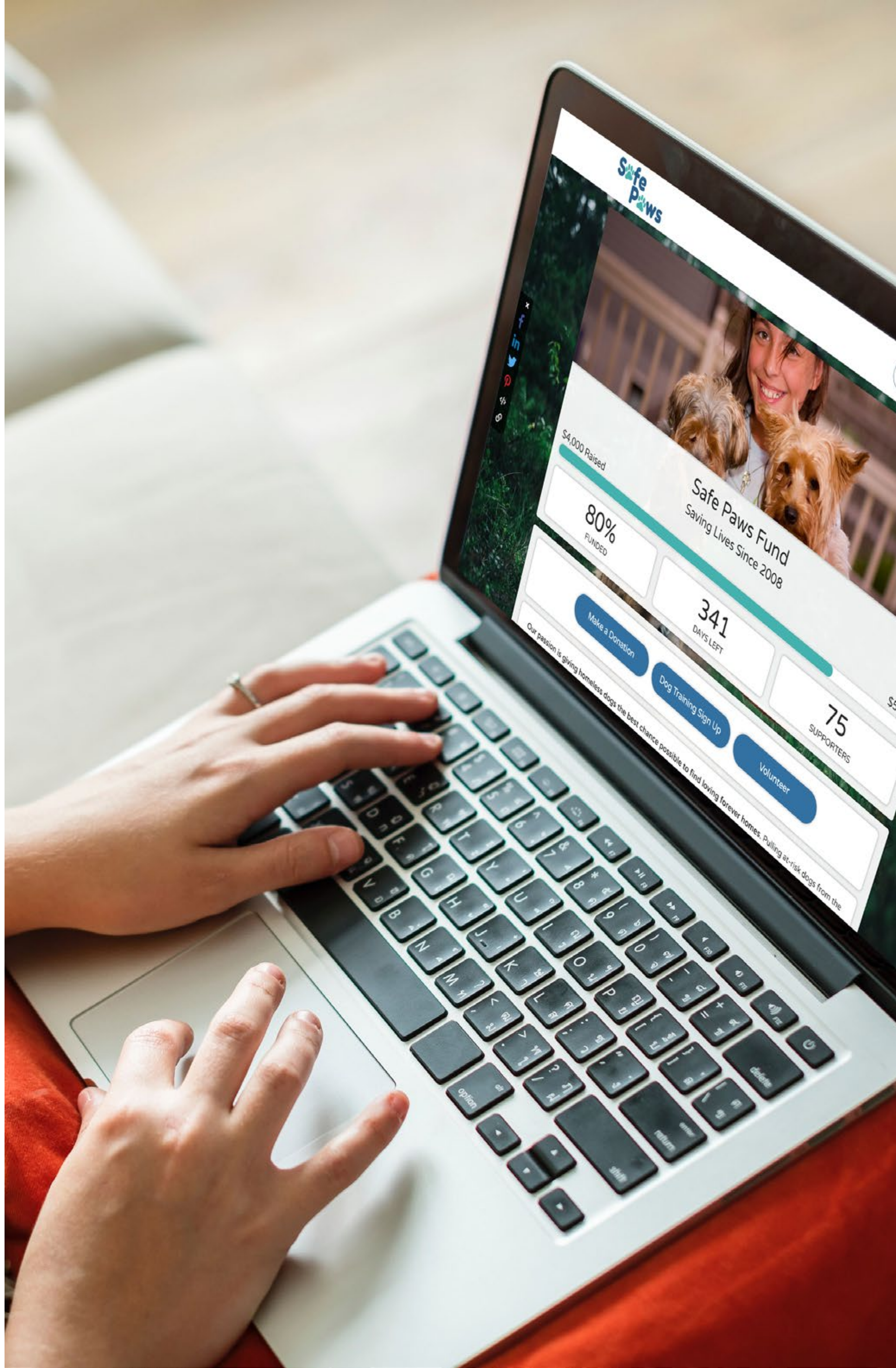
ONLINE FUNDRAISING TOOLS

The world is filled with instant gratification, from same day product delivery to streaming TV and movies. With this in mind, don't test your donors' patience by making them dig around your website, email campaigns, or fundraising pages to find out how they can support your cause. Do make online fundraising simple, with all your fundraising and supporter engagement tools easily accessible from your website and easily managed from a centralized place.



For nonprofits, online fundraising tools make this possible. By facilitating more donations and engagement, online tools can also create vast savings in terms of the overhead required to collect and process contributions.

To successfully engage donors, your website should have:

Large buttons in a contrasting color.

Donate or Give Now buttons on every page.

A header that follows your supporters across pages with a clear call-to-action.

Multiple ways for supporters to engage with your cause.

Your engagement tools should be:
Easily managed from a single place. You don't want to waste your time logging into and learning different user interfaces for capital campaigns, crowdfunding, volunteer management, and event management, and you don't want to have to reconcile data from multiple sources at the end of the year.

For the best results, all of your initiatives should also be seamlessly managed from a single dashboard, allowing you to create any campaign you dream up!

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P

PASSIONATE PHILANTHROPISTS

One of the most significant accomplishments in life is finding your passion—that powerful feeling for an issue, cause or organization that commands your interest and fuels your desire to make a difference. Some people find it at 5, and some find it at 90. Nevertheless, when people find their passion, they give more of their time and money to increase their personal satisfaction and impact.

Passionate philanthropists are distinct from your ordinary donors. They want to be more directly engaged; for them it's not just about making repeat donations to your nonprofit. These donors have immense value and require thoughtful cultivation.

They want to feel responsible for making a substantial, lasting impact. Passionate philanthropists will also volunteer, bring in new donors, and serve your community.

Don't let them go unnoticed!

When fostering relationships with passionate philanthropists, keep in mind that passionate people want to see the difference that they can make in the world, not the difference that you can make.

Your task, then, is to spend time with them. You want to show them that your organization is the perfect match for their own philanthropic goals.

Above all, listen to them. Meet with them one-on-one to talk about their charitable vision, reach out to them when you need volunteers, and always give them credit for your success.

By shifting the credit from you onto them, they will feel that they are personally responsible for the impact your organization has (which they are). As a result, you will maximize both their satisfaction and their level of engagement with your cause.

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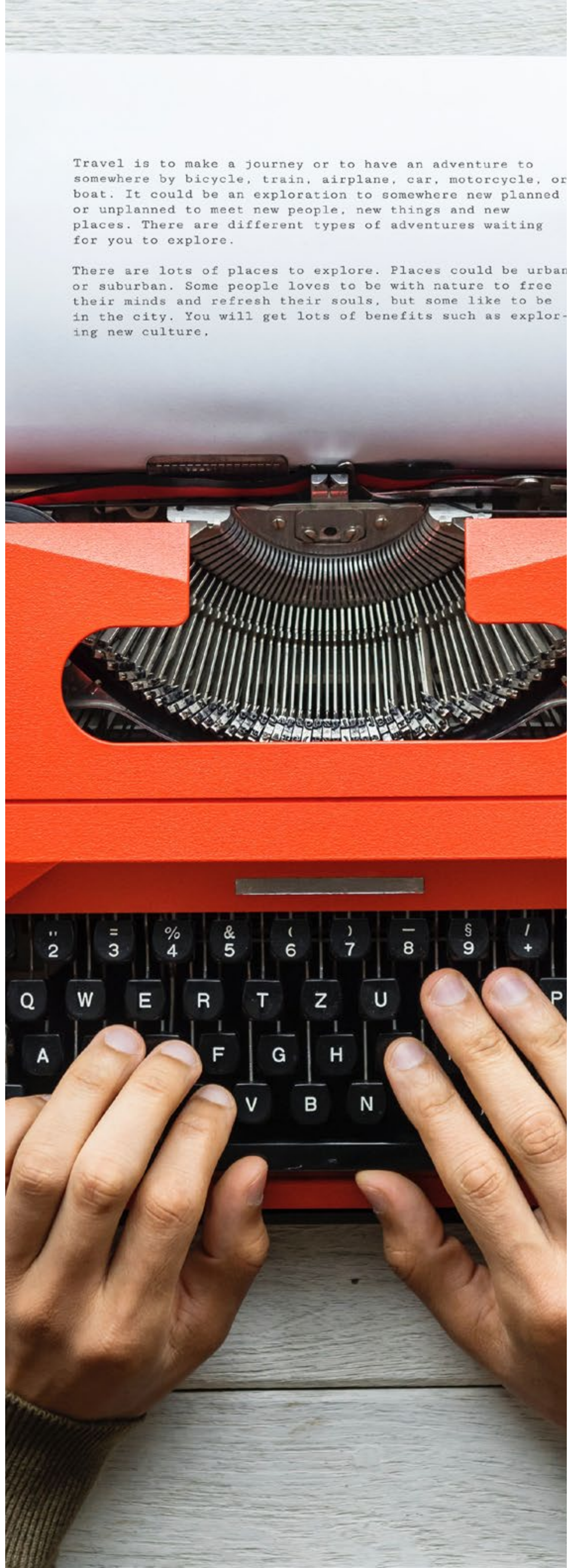
QUEUING QUALITY CONTENT

Quality **content marketing** can help your nonprofit reach new supporters, raise awareness, increase donations, and increase engagement among existing donors. Here are a few ways that nonprofits of any size can leverage content to drive overall engagement:



Focus on the people your organization serves.

As we discussed earlier, storytelling is a great way to create content. Fortunately, nonprofits can easily tell stories from interesting angles that engage audiences, focusing on human stories and their emotional resonance. The kinds of stories that inspire you to come to work each day—and that represent the purpose of nonprofit work—are the ones you want to share. These will be about the lives of people touched by your organization.

Know what to share and where.

Different platforms are specialized for different content. Instagram and Pinterest are image-based platforms, blogs and Facebook are better for long-form content and videos, and Twitter is best for short and immediate information. It's important to understand each platform to judge what content is best on which site and when.

Create a content calendar

Content calendars control the publication of content across different media and are the best way to queue your quality content. These calendars organize your content and ensure that it is posted at regular intervals. With an editorial calendar you can:

Brainstorm content ideas to publish, where to publish, and when to publish.

Write each piece of content based on the publication schedule.

Edit each piece of content.

Plan to publish each piece of content on a specific date and time.

Measure and manage your content's performance

Measuring and tracking engagement allows your organization to improve the quality of your content by finding what works and what doesn't. Some important things to keep an eye on are:

Comments and social actions such as likes, shares, favorites, retweets, reblogs, etc.

Attention time: how long does a user stay on your page?

How many readers scroll to the bottom of your stories?

Use this information to improve and tailor your content for your audience over time.

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R

RECURRING DONATIONS

Recurring donations allow you to better predict cash flow and plan for their future. They're also an important way to engage a millennial audience. Creating a sustainable recurring gifts program can make life a lot easier for your nonprofit.

Here's what you can do to get more recurring donations for your organization:

Ask.

Make a compelling ask for recurring donations in a prominent place on your website or your donation form.

Emphasize.

Some organizations don't offer a recurring donations option or make it visible enough on their website. This option should be just as obvious as a one-time donation on your website and donation forms. A strategically placed call-to-action can significantly increase the number of recurring gifts your nonprofit receives.

Explain the impact.

Describe what your nonprofit can accomplish when you receive a recurring donation so your donors can understand that they are making a more significant impact when they choose this option.

Have suggested recurring gift amounts.

Monthly donations are a convenient way for donors to contribute to a cause without taking too much out of their pocket all at once. If your nonprofit offers suggestions of appropriate monthly contribution amounts, your average recurring donation is likely to be much higher.

Make it easy to cancel or change a recurring donation.

No one wants to try something if they have no control over ending it, especially when there's money involved. Make sure that your donors understand how they can change or cancel their monthly donations; this will make them more likely to give it a try.

Create incentives.

Consider giving monthly donors special recognition or perks. They will feel special, valued, and be encouraged them to continue to give to your cause. This is also a great way to create a "crate of leverage" for your organization, because a donor who has given previously to your cause will be more inclined to donate in the future with less hesitation if an incentive was involved.

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SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

While social media plays a central role in the lives of individuals and organizations alike, mastering social media marketing for your organization can seem like a daunting task. Luckily, by building a social media strategy, you can set your organization up for success (and learn a lot along the way). You'll want to craft a plan that is actionable, measurable, and concrete—yet flexible enough to adapt as technology and your programs evolve.

Here's how you can do it:

Social can't exist in a silo. Make sure all departments of your organization are on board with your social media strategy.

Assess your current social media capabilities.

Take notes on what's working and what isn't. Some questions to ask are what platforms you're already using (if any), whether or not you are regularly posting engaging content, and what has been successful for your organization in the past.

Take a close look at your online community.

Who are you already engaging with? Are you already connected with your supporters, board members, employees, and partners? Don't be afraid to personally ask them to follow your nonprofit on social media and share your content.

List your organizational goals.

Define ahead of time how you plan to use social media to reach these goals. Simply establishing an online presence is a great way to give your organization legitimacy in the public eye, but don't stop there.

Tie your goals to metrics.

Whether your goal is online engagement, building a mailing list, or recruiting new donors, define metrics that will tell you whether your strategy is working or not.

Find the right platform.

Which social media platforms do your constituents already use? Meeting people where they're at will help you reach your goals.

Assess skills within your organization.

Who will generate the stories you'll use to create regular updates? Who can manage your social accounts, create visually compelling content, and post updates? Is anyone great at photography, video creation, or graphic design? Plan ahead and set expectations so you can regularly share engaging content.

Use free resources.

Once you put your strategy into place, Canva for Nonprofits allows you to easily design images for use on social media and resize them for sharing across platforms. You can also create a free Hootsuite account to schedule social media posts ahead of time. These resources will make it easier for you to focus on crafting engaging content.

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T

TEAM AND PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING

Two heads are better than one, and a hundred donors are exponentially more powerful than a single donor with the same capabilities. The math is simple: more people = more impact. That's why team fundraising is so beneficial to nonprofit organizations. It helps your organization leverage the power of people by tapping into networks of like-minded individuals who are passionate about your cause.

In recent years, **peer-to-peer fundraising** (a type of crowdfunding) has become very popular among nonprofits. And for a good reason: peer-to-peer fundraising empowers your supporters to engage their own personal and professional networks to raise money from their peers on your organization's behalf. **Running a peer-to-peer campaign** is a great way to reach new audiences and grow your support base.

Team fundraising is a type of peer-to-peer fundraising where peer-to-peer fundraisers form teams and set team goals. Team fundraising encourages people to **reach their goals and finish strong**. Here's how to incorporate peer-to-peer and team fundraising into your strategy:

Set goals.

Just like any other campaign, the first thing you need to do is to establish specific goals that you want to achieve. You'll then want to clearly communicate these goals with your supporters.

Define the format.

Peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns can be built around big events produced by your organization (walk-a-thons, galas, etc.); **third-party events** (city marathons, etc.); or DIY events which are constituent-led (birthdays, tributes, memorials, etc.). You can also run them as purely online fundraisers.

Choose your technology.

Your supporters will need a way to create their own online fundraising pages, send emails to friends and family, use social media, and accept donations online. In addition to that, your organization will need to be able to track the campaign, manage your list of fundraisers, and communicate with your supporters.

Get—and stay—connected.

You'll want to connect with some of your most enthusiastic champions and **ask them to participate in your fundraiser**. You can even offer incentives, like discounted tickets or special recognition at upcoming events, to get them excited about participating.

Once they commit to fundraising on your behalf, provide them with the tools to create their own campaign page and offer them help throughout the process. It's a good idea to develop boilerplate campaign copy that they can customize with a personal message to share their unique reasons for supporting your cause. Follow up and check in with your fundraising team regularly to ensure their success.

Measure and monitor.

Use built-in analytics on your fundraising platform to capture relevant data. You'll also want to capture information from your website and your most popular social media sites. Track campaign shares using built-in analytics on social media so you know who's talking about you and what platform(s) they're using to share the campaign. Doing this will help you manage your peer-to-peer campaigns and give you information to reflect on for the future.

Reflect.

Reflect on your campaigns with the people who played a crucial role in them and discuss what worked, what didn't, and what your organization can do with peer-to-peer fundraising in the future.

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U

UPDATE YOUR SUPPORTERS

Updating your supporters with valuable information and inspiring stories will make them feel engaged and keep your organization top of mind during fundraising campaigns. Sharing frequent updates also inspires more donations.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when updating your campaign supporters:

Update regularly.
Sharing updates on a consistent schedule will keep supporters interested, involved, and invoke a sense of urgency to support your cause. Consider sharing:

General progress and milestones reached

Reminders about the campaign deadline

Media coverage of your campaign event

News stories that relate to your cause

Use a variety of media in your updates.
While some people respond to detailed written descriptions, others will be drawn to short videos or beautiful images related to your cause.

Share your updates across networks.
Aside from putting updates on your website, share them via social media and email to maximize your reach.

Overall, sharing updates with your supporters shows them that you recognize their participation—and that their generosity is making a difference in the world. Think of it this way: who wouldn't want to be reminded that they've done something amazing?

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V

VOLUNTEERS

According to **The Volunteering and Civic Life in America report**, one in every four American residents volunteered in 2017, totaling 7.8 billion volunteer hours and creating an estimated value of $184 billion. Top volunteer activities included fundraising, food preparation and distribution, general labor, and tutoring/ teaching, but there are many more ways that a volunteer can contribute.

Make sure you're not missing out on the generosity and time that millions of people are willing to give to organizations like yours.

To create a mutually rewarding relationship with your volunteers:

Take the time to assess your organization's needs and develop reasonable timelines for volunteer activities.
Keep in mind that setting your volunteers up for success will require an upfront investment of time and resources since there is a learning curve for any volunteer activity.

Prepare informational materials and spend time training your volunteers.
To keep people engaged, it's a good idea to have seasoned volunteers train and mentor newer volunteers. Not only will this increase efficiency, but also help create a sense of community around your cause.

Cultivate your volunteers thoughtfully and leverage their support.
Volunteers are also important for nonprofit organizations because they are **twice as likely to donate** to a charity as non-volunteers.

This means that they are not only great assets to your organization in terms of the time they can offer, but also because they can broaden your donor base. In the same way that you nurture your donors, you will want to make sure to thank your volunteers and send them regular, personalized updates.

Make it a point to publicly celebrate your volunteers, too. Posting updates on social media and acknowledging them in your Annual Report or other public-facing materials is a great way to make them feel like an integral part of your mission. Showing your gratitude will keep them invested in your work and increase the likelihood that they will contribute financially in the future.

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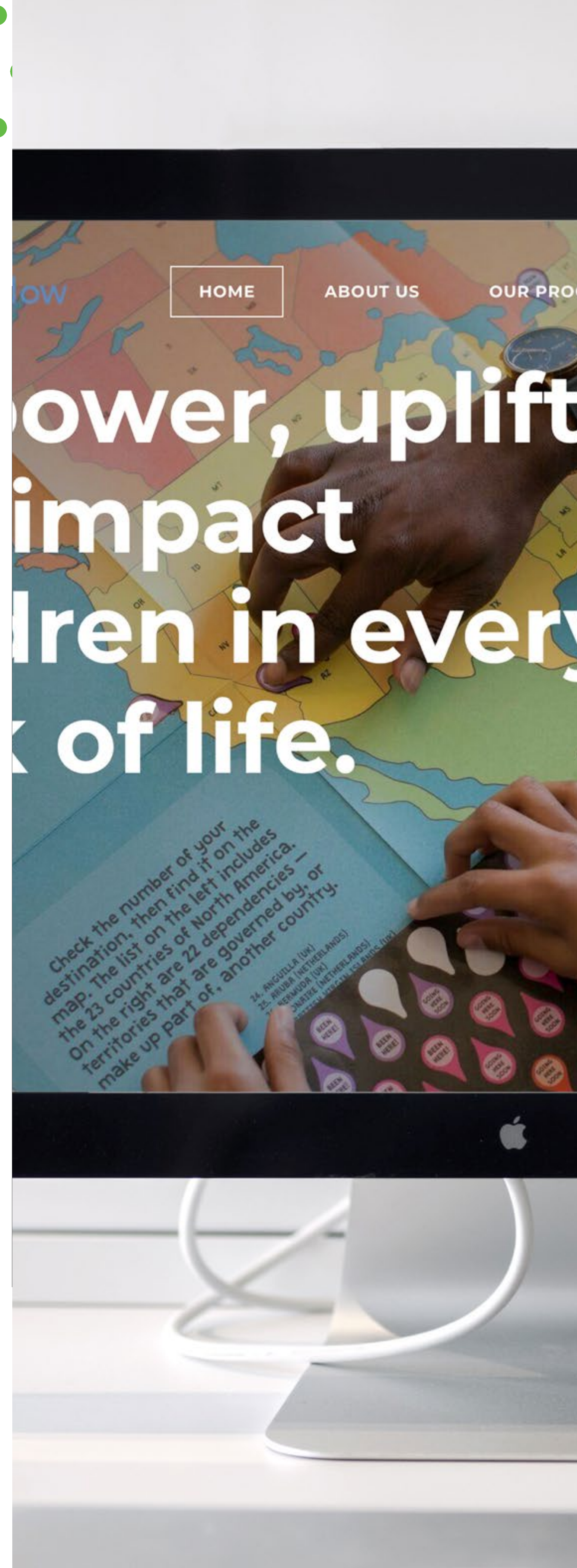
WELL-DESIGNED WEBSITE

Your website is a window into your work. You might not realize it, but your website's layout, color scheme, content, and design dramatically affect how your supporters view your organization. These elements are also critical factors in donors' decisions to contribute through your site, whether consciously or not!

There are tons of tools out there that allow you to easily create a custom website without hiring a web developer. Weebly, Wix, and Squarespace are great web-hosting services that enable anyone to create drag-and-drop, template-based websites.

Wordpress.org is another that requires a separate hosting account, as well as a bit more technical knowledge, but that is ultimately more flexible if your organization has a tech-savvy member on board.



Design Tips:

Flat design.
Gone are the days of 3-D effects, gradients, and drop shadows in web design.

No Sliders.
Sliding images across the top of the site distract supporters from getting deeper into the content of your site. Swap it for an image or a simple video. You can even use stock videos!

Flexibility and Control.
The ability to change your website on demand is key to keep up with your changing content, programming, and design trends. Take the time to familiarize yourself and your staff with your website editing platform so you can make changes on the fly.

Of course, in addition to great design, you'll also need fundraising and engagement tools right on your site to make it easy for supporters to contribute.

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X

EXPRESS YOURSELF

Gone are the days of dry, humorless web copy that tries to please everyone. The internet has evolved into an increasingly social, dynamic, and interactive place where those who develop a unique and relatable voice can truly shine. Don't be afraid to share your personality with the world! Although it can be intimidating to put yourself out there in such a public sphere, your nonprofit will benefit greatly from letting your humanity shine through.

Of course, as with any of your communications, keep your supporters in mind and tailor your tone to match your audience.

Developing your nonprofit's brand can be both fun and challenging. To keep everyone on the same page, you should set guidelines early on for what types of content and language are appropriate and things to avoid. Be sure to share these general rules of thumb for online communications with your entire organization, especially those who will be posting photos, **blog posts**, or articles on behalf of your nonprofit.

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YOUTUBE: THE POWER OF VIDEO

We're visual creatures. The emotion and connection that can be conveyed with a well-thought-out video are invaluable in today's media-saturated online landscape.

What's exciting is that today, [you don't have to hire a whole film crew to capture the essence of your mission](). Smart-phone video recording technology improves continuously, and viewers love to watch short clips on the web instead of drawn-out documentary type videos.

Many free tools are available to make your raw footage more engaging, too. [Animoto.com]() turns your photos into video slideshows, iMovie (Mac) and Windows Movie Maker make video editing as easy as drag-and-drop, and YouTube even offers its own built-in editor.

Getting eyes on your video:

Once you've created a video you're ready to share, it's time to think about how to distribute it. YouTube, and other online video channels like Vimeo, Instagram, and Snapchat, are great avenues to getting your videos in front of your potential supporters. YouTube is the best-known platform of the bunch and has the largest community of users. In fact, over 6 billion hours of video are watched on YouTube every month, and it reaches more U.S. adults between the ages of 18-34 than any cable TV network. That community alone is reason enough to create a YouTube channel once you've created your video content. While your content "lives" on YouTube, you'll also be able to share it with your supporters on social media and via email.

YouTube's Nonprofit Program (which is part of Google for Nonprofits) allows nonprofits to share their stories, accept donations directly from the video, make call-to-action overlays, and more. Check it out and apply for a nonprofit account through their [Impact Lab]().

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Z

ZERO IN ON YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

We've saved the best for last. If you want to be successful at fundraising, it's imperative to zero in on your target audience.

Focusing on a narrow target audience doesn't exclude those outside of that group. It does center your attention on those who are most likely to engage with your organization and donate to your cause. A clearly defined target audience is vital for creating a successful fundraising strategy since it's much easier to market your efforts to a specific group of people whom you know will positively receive your message than to a general, undefined, or overly broad audience.

So, here's what you can do to zero in on a narrow target audience:

Analyze your programs.
List the features of your programs and then list the benefits they provide. In general, whom do they serve? Who is involved in delivering your programs and who has provided support in the past? What values do they have in common? This basic understanding will help you begin to create a picture of your target audience.

Understand your demographics.
Your target audience should not only be interested in the goals of your programs and have similar values, but should also have the means to participate in or otherwise support your services. Understanding the demographics of your existing supporters will allow you to segment your marketing and communications efforts to effectively target specific content to different groups of people, making them more likely to respond to your appeals.

Have a clear understanding of your current supporters':

Age, Location, Gender, Occupation, Political/Religious Affiliations, Marital Status and Family Size

Also define their characteristics, including:

Values, Lifestyle, Interests/ Hobbies and Habits

Put this information into action.
Once you have a clear understanding of who you are trying to reach, incorporate this information into your fundraising strategy. Design fundraising appeals and events that speak to the shared values and experiences of your constituents.

When you've zeroed in on your target audience, you can focus your fundraising efforts on motivating existing and potential supporters to donate to your cause—with an alphabet of tools under your belt!

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ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY. FUND YOUR CAUSE.

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Take a deeper dive into the basics of online fundraising and digital marketing strategy to take your small nonprofit to the next level.

Weekly posts will help you build, run, and scale a great impact organization.

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Flipcause

We know that cultivating donors and raising funds can be challenging.

We also believe your fundraising software doesn't have to be.

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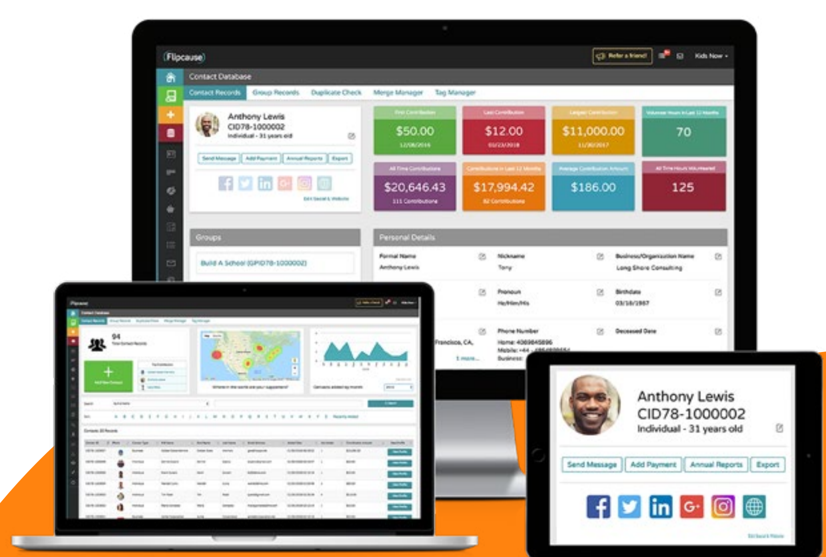
[Request a demo to learn more]



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