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A PLAYBOOK FOR EFFECTIVE FUNDRAISING IN 2022

5 plays to evolve donor outreach
for better engagement

INTRODUCTION

With so much uncertainty going around, it's easy for fundraisers to feel uneasy about donor contributions.

Here's the thing: Donors tend to remain donors.

According to a Lilly Foundation study, charitable giving increased in 2021 and is expected to be up even more — roughly 5.7% more — in 2022.

We can work with that. And as you look ahead, it's so important to

1) Stay positive and 2) Remain in constant pursuit of improving your efforts to engage donors, new and old.

In this playbook, we've pulled together a handful of proven donor engagement tactics. They've worked (extremely well) for our clients in the nonprofit space.

Here, take a look...



COLLABORATE WITH DONORS

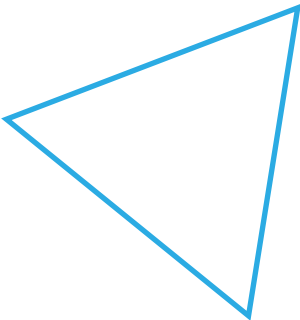
Play: Targeted survey enhancement to drive up response

Adding a brief survey to a mailing kit can create a connected experience and increase response. If possible, incorporate personalization to localize the survey questions and further enhance results.

SEE IT IN ACTION

For one client in the conservation and education space, we added a personalized survey to an already successful annual appeal mailing campaign. This only made the program stronger.

- The addition of the survey improved response by more than 30%.
- When adding a premium gift as a thank you for completing and returning the survey, response rates jumped above 100%.



Pro tip:
Survey questions should be developed to help guide the reader's thoughts as to the reasons why they should support the organization. Adding a survey also provides the organization a reason to recognize the donor with a "Thank You" gift or offer for their valuable input and participation in the survey.

CREATE INTEREST WITH ONE SMALL CHANGE

Play: Lean on testing to entertain new, intriguing enhancements

Over time, fundraising kits fatigue. It happens. The challenge is to continually come up with new, compelling, low-cost methods to test for added response.

For one client continually looking to improve upon their control by testing new formats and freemiums, we suggested testing an inline embossed texture, bubble pattern as an inexpensive addition to the outer envelope. This enhancement would simulate the appearance of a padded mailer, suggesting there was something important inside.

SEE IT IN ACTION

The embossed texture on the outer envelope — everything else remained the same — increased the amount of openings and response by 10%. Millions of these embossed outer envelope kits continue to be mailed as one of their winning control packages.

Pro tip:

Too often organizations try to save themselves into prosperity. The reality is very successful charities understand package cost is of low relevance. They recognize net dollars is what's relevant.

It's important not to limit yourself in terms of what you'll test by not adding something that costs more than your control to the mix. Just test it. If the more expensive option works, then next year, ask for additional budget dollars based on the test result and the ROI associated with it.



Pro tip:

We currently don't know when normalcy will come back and what it will look like. It's vital for organizations to have a virtual strategy or contingency plan in place for their events, so meaningful fundraising efforts can still be made.

ADAPTING TO UNCERTAINTY, VIRTUALLY

Play: Optimize the role of fulfillment in virtual programs

Organizations that lean on peer-to-peer fundraising events (e.g., auctions, bike rides, runs, and walks) now need a plan B. Taking these in-person events online can be head-scratching, but worth a bigger conversation (right now).

We're currently working with a not-for-profit festival that coincides with a large professional sporting event. A key event within the festival is a mini-marathon that welcomes more than 30,000+ participants. Due to COVID-19, last year's in-person event was cancelled. However, the festival still needed to provide value (to donors and corporate sponsors), create engagement, and drive giving. It embraced the idea of hosting a virtual running event.

SEE IT IN ACTION

From a fulfillment and postage standpoint, RRD emphasized the importance of providing tangible goods (e.g., medals, t-shirts, hats) in a timely fashion and format to effectively reduce some of the value gap created by the cancelled live event.

In a virtual race setting — from treadmills to neighborhood parks — participants track their activity on their terms. When they hit the “finish line,” RRD extends the engagement through fulfillment of the promised swag bag to wherever the participant is located. In this instance, the event had a global reach.

For this festival, the virtual mini-marathon has been a success. So much so, to recoup lost revenue, our client has decided to put on three more virtual running events this year.



Pro tip:

Tailoring freemiums like books and special reports to an individual or targeted segment tends to resonate well with higher-dollar donors. In the healthcare space, specifically, a “special report” is an example of a very effective technique for these folks, because they look like they’re prepared for an individual donor and include content (e.g., news, research, updates, human interest stories) around specific areas of interest.

HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL CONTROLS HAVE ROOM TO IMPROVE

Play: Insert a freemium geared toward the recipient to lift results

We’re working with nonprofit organization who frequently uses multiple freemiums (the offer of a free item to encourage response) in their direct mail campaigns. Their control format was achieving an impressive 11% response rate, however the organization was interested in seeking a unique idea that would provide them with a lift in response.

The organization already had multiple freemium gifts (included in their control, but wanted to test whether the addition of one more freemium gift would pay for itself through improved results. Backed by their own research, our strategists suggested inserting a game book geared toward adults with items such as sudoku, crossword puzzles, and word searches.

SEE IT IN ACTION

A variety of freemium combinations were tested with their house file to determine which had the greatest effect on ROI. The addition of the game book to the control lifted response by 27%. This lift brought our client to an incredible 14% response rate to its house file. They’re now determined to replicate this test using their prospect file.

DIGITALLY TRANSFORM YOUR PRINT EXECUTION

Play: Implement Web2Print to streamline and unify campaigns with consistency

“Going digital” in a fundraising sense can remove a number of headaches organizations face as they manage and execute campaigns. But where do you start? Short answer: Digital print.

We helped the archdiocese of a major city on the East Coast leverage the power of Web2Print to automate print production and drive consistent branding across a wide swath of stakeholders (i.e., individual parishes).

In a nutshell, Web2Print houses pre-set templates and group-specific information — for letterheads, invitations, newsletters, flyers, etc. — on a secure platform to maintain brand consistency and quality. For approved users, this streamlines multiple processes, including production, ordering, and mailing.

SEE IT IN ACTION

Through RRD’s Web2Print solution Streamline Giving, the archdiocese could effectively manage fundraising programs that help facilitate individual parishes within a Diocese. This implementation produced a laundry list of benefits for the client, including:

- Delivered quick turnaround times, reduce lead times, and allowed for mailings to be appropriately timed around parish events
- Eliminated inventory and waste challenges associated with printing in bulk
- Online product templates improved parish-specific customization and reduced staff’s coordination time and effort
- Created consistent branding and centralized reporting



Pro tip:


For large initiatives like annual appeals, as much as an organization will call it an “annual appeal mailing,” they might not be unifying under that theme. Consider the power of a logo for the campaign itself. Then the entire campaign becomes branded and shares a common look no matter where you see it. From a mailer to an email to the website, the campaign logo is a single element that helps tie everything together.

IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THIS...

Your charitable giving goals can be tough to meet in a normal year — help is available if you need it

Remember: Your request for financial support is not an inconvenience. It's not poorly-timed, either. It's a necessity.

Format, creative, list procurement and management, production, distribution — RRD can help with all of the above to evolve your communications and campaigns.



“For many donors, giving is a key part of them feeling human. They can be generous, despite the scarcity around them.”

Marc Pitman,
“The Fundraising Coach”

It's time to make up any lost ground. If you're ready to hear how, we're ready to show you.

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