



DEVELOPING A
FUNDRAISING
PLAN FOR YOUR
NONPROFIT

While we all wish we could address all of the elements of your organization's mission without paying a dime, that's just not realistic. It's for this very reason that fundraising is a core aspect of any nonprofit's regular activities.

All of the funds you raise are reinvested into your cause, meaning the more money you raise, the more you can accomplish for your mission.

Your organization should constantly be working to make the most of each fundraising adventure you embark on with this in mind. Luckily, you can take several concrete steps to develop a plan that will help you maximize these fundraising strategies, and we're going to walk through each one of them in this e-book.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Define Your Fundraising Goal

Create Supporter Personas

Choose a Type of Fundraiser

Develop a Fundraising Agenda

Determine Your Marketing Plan

Track Fundraising Results

Follow Up After the Campaign



Define Your Fundraising Goal

Before you start raising money willy nilly, you need to know what you're working toward and the purpose of the campaign you launch. Consider the intention of your fundraising campaign and how it fits into your larger nonprofit strategy.

What do you want to get from your fundraiser?

There are several common goals that you might want to achieve by launching this fundraiser. Here are some of the most common ones:

- Raise money for a specific project.
- Raise money for your annual fund.
- Increase donor engagement and retention.
- Steward supporters for future gifts.
- Show appreciation for past gifts.
- Develop new relationships in the community.
- Increase brand recognition for your organization.

Choosing your primary goal for your fundraiser, you'll be able to continue your plans to meet that goal. Of course, to be considered a "fundraiser," part of your goals regarding your activities will involve raising money. However, this is sometimes the secondary goal if your primary goal is more long-term.

For example, one nonprofit might have the primary goal of increasing brand awareness in the community. They'd choose a fundraiser that focuses heavily on marketing and expanding the brand name (something like peer-to-peer fundraising would work well). And to raise the most funds as possible during this campaign, this particular nonprofit might choose a goal of \$50,000.



Create Supporter Personas

After you've chosen your nonprofit's goals and financial objectives, you should make sure you're reaching *the right* people. Consider the audiences your nonprofit usually appeals to. Then, create **supporter personas** to represent the audience you want to reach with your fundraising campaign.

Personas are archetypes of your audience, providing an overview of the general qualities exhibited by your ideal supporters.

By using personas, you'll be able to choose your audience for your fundraiser better. Then, when it comes time to start marketing your campaign, you'll find it easier to send the most specific and targeted message possible.

To create these personas, first, start by analyzing the information in your donor database about your audience. Then, you might even take it a step further by reaching out with interview questions to a portion of them. Look for qualities in your supporters such as:

- Marriage status
- Geographic location
- Household income
- Age or generation
- Family details
- Sex or gender
- Personal interests and hobbies
- Employment
- Passions
- Past involvement in your organization

From this information, you might discover certain commonalities among supporters, allowing you to create four to five different personas to whom you generally want to reach out.

After creating these personas, consider which of them you want to reach out to for your fundraiser. Which will be most likely to respond positively to the campaign? Which is the ideal supporter to accomplish your goals? That's who you'll target your marketing campaign to.



Choose a Type of Fundraiser

So you've discovered the general goals of your fundraiser and your target audience that you'd like to reach. Now, it's time to use that information and choose a fundraiser itself. What type of fundraiser will both meet your primary goals and *intrigue* your target audience?

Let's consider, for example, a dog shelter with the primary goal of raising \$50,000 in funds for medical expenses for the animals in their care. However, they'd also like to increase brand recognition for their organization during this campaign. When they host their annual dog walk-a-thon in a few months, they'll have a broader audience to promote the opportunity to.

In this case, the target audience for the dog shelter is young, married adults. They're usually active and may have small children. Therefore, to reach this audience and their fundraising goal, the dog shelter decides to host a 5K run with a peer-to-peer fundraiser leading up to the event. They collect sponsorships and sell t-shirts to raise additional funds while spreading the word about their cause to the

community.

Your fundraising goals and target audience are crucial elements to choose the best campaign to accomplish your goals, but you'll need to consider a couple of other factors as well. For instance, you should consider:

- **Your fundraising team capacity.** How many people do you have to help plan and execute the fundraiser? What have they been able to accomplish in the past?
- **Your fundraising budget.** How much money do you have to host this fundraiser? Can you ensure a net positive experience?

Choosing your fundraiser should be fun! There are many options and ideas out there that can help you get started with your campaign. Don't forget that you can combine a few different ideas to maximize your revenue.



Develop a Fundraising Agenda

Based on the fundraising idea that you choose, you can start developing your agenda for the affair. This involves choosing your event activities and schedule that will engage your supporters while raising funds.

While some fundraising ideas, like crowdfunding campaigns, rely most heavily on marketing campaigns, many other options require some in-depth planning and agenda-setting to be successful. For example, galas often require some additional planning to get off the ground.

When you start setting your agenda for your fundraising campaign, ask yourself the following questions:

- What will be the duration of the campaign?
- What activities will excite and engage the supporters?
- How will this campaign raise funds?
- Are there additional activities that you can incorporate to help raise more funds?

From there, start crafting a schedule. Be sure to space out the various activities throughout the campaign so that your supporters are entertained the entire time of the campaign, especially for events (in-person, virtual, and hybrid). The last thing you want is for supporters to get bored and leave early.



Determine Your Marketing Plan

After you've determined your campaign's details, it'll be time to start marketing it to your target audience. Make sure you have at least a rough outline of the campaign activities before beginning your marketing plan. That way, you can highlight the fundraiser's engaging activity opportunities in your messaging to supporters.

Consider the target audience personas that you want to reach, then dive into creating a marketing plan that will best capture their attention. Decide which platform, message, and timeline will be most impactful and effective for your particular audience.

CHOOSE YOUR PLATFORMS

What platforms has your target audience persona been most responsive to in the past? This is usually a useful indicator of the platform that they will continue responding to for your particular campaign.

However, don't put all of your eggs in one basket. Be sure to take a multi-channel approach and choose a variety of platforms to increase the number of touch-points your audience has with your messaging and ensure it reaches a wide variety of people.

You might consider using social media, email, your website, direct mail, and even community bulletin boards to get the word out about your fundraiser.

DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE

Once you've chosen the platforms, you'll use, develop your message to put out using these platforms. Customize this message for both the platform you use, and for the segment of your audience you'll reach.

For example, if you're promoting a 5K event, you might write emails to several audience segments. You might write one message for potential sponsors, another for annual 5K veterans, and a third for new potential attendees.

Be sure to write separate messages for each platform as well as each audience segment. Posts on Facebook might be more text-heavy than messages published on Twitter. Meanwhile, Instagram messages will focus more heavily on images, while emails might be more long-form and include multiple media elements.

Use the information you know about your audience to craft the message that will be more appealing. If you know they're highly interested in athletic activities, you might place more emphasis on your event's athletic elements. Or, if you know they're anxious to learn, you might instead put your focus on the keynote speakers for your fundraising events.

CREATE A TIMELINE

With your messages and platforms picked out, you'll be able to create a general timeline for your marketing plan to follow. For most campaigns, you'll want to start the marketing process about a month or two before the fundraiser begins.

Automate your outreach where possible, pre-scheduling your messages to your audience based on your timeline. This practice will give you additional time to focus instead on the event activities and preparing your team for the campaign.

Track Fundraising Results

Be sure you have a system in place to track the results of your nonprofit's fundraiser accurately. This will be an integral part of ensuring you're able to reach your organization's goals. For example, if your fundraiser's goal is to reach new audiences, you might customize a report that tracks all of the new donors that you attract with this campaign. Watch these metrics during the campaign to see how you're stacking up against your goal.

When it comes to fundraising revenue, you should be sure to have internal records and external trackers to measure your progress against your goals.

Most software solutions you'll use for digital fundraising will have automatic internal reports to gain insights about donations collected during the campaign. But be sure these reports are easily integrated with your donor database so that you can keep all data in a single location. You can also add any additional in-person or mail-in donations and attribute them to the same campaign.

If you have an available dashboard as well, be sure to customize it with the measurements of your campaign goals. This will help you keep an eye on the success of your campaign from start to finish.

Finally, the best way to engage your supporters and convince them to contribute to your campaign is to show them how their contribution makes a difference in reaching your goals. We recommend using a fundraising thermometer to show supporters your progress and encourage them to continue giving!



Follow Up After the Campaign

After your campaign ends, your job isn't over! You should be sure to follow up with your supporters and thank them for helping you reach your goals. This is a key step, no matter if you're raising \$100 with a crowdfunding campaign or \$1 million with a fundraising gala.

Keep track of the details from each contribution made to your campaign, from the major donations to the smallest ones. Then, follow up on each one. You may decide to use different follow-up strategies for your various donors depending on the size and nature of their gift, but the important thing is to ensure you thank them all. After all, they all helped make your fundraiser a success.

Thanking donors is the first important step to build relationships and maintain these relationships for the long-haul. According to Dr. Adrian Sareant's study, an incredible 13% of donors end up lapsing because they never get thanked by the organization.

Reach out via email, phone calls, and even gifts to say "thank you" to supporters. You can also take it a step further by creating a donor recognition wall or organizing an appreciation event for your largest contributors.



Conclusion

Fundraising campaigns are an integral part of your nonprofit's strategy. By launching these campaigns, you gain the resources you need to achieve your goals and make your mission possible.

These steps outline the most important aspects of designing your next successful fundraising campaign. By following them, you'll maximize the impact and efficiency of your fundraising efforts.