

SIX STEPS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR FUNDRAISING EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

Quick and easy strategies that will improve
any nonprofit email campaign.





INTRODUCTION

Just because email campaigns are easy and less expensive doesn't mean they will work.

Email campaigns can be very efficient for cost-effective fundraising and even promoting your cause. But just because they can be easy to pull off doesn't mean they guarantee success. Many nonprofit emails end up unopened, deleted, or worse, in the spam folder – never even seen by the recipient. When this happens, nonprofits become frustrated, perplexed, and ready to end the entire campaign. But what many organizations don't know is that just a slight improvement in open or click-through rates can make a big difference in the success of the campaign.

Here are a few easy steps you as a fundraiser can take to optimize your email campaigns and see noticeable improvements.

STEP 1: MAKE IT PERSONAL

One of the quickest ways to increase donations is to personalize an email to the potential donor. It doesn't have to be elaborate. Beginning an email with "Dear Jane" vs. "Dear Donor" is usually the simplest way. Personalization works because it creates a more genuine connection than an average mass email. If you can also find a way to include any other specific information and improve that connection, all the better. This can include references to particular programs a donor has expressed interest in, or mentions of past gift levels. All these details let donors know they are important and not just another credit card.





STEP 2: INCLUDE VISUALS

Visuals like images, gifs, videos, and even consistent header and footer treatments are great for telling a story, breaking up text, keeping brand consistency, and showing a reader the impact of an organization. Our data show that including just one photo in an email can dramatically increase conversion rates. When designing an email campaign, you should constantly evaluate what visuals will be relevant to the message of each email. If your organization doesn't have a specific image that fits into your email theme, there are numerous stock photography websites to search for relevant images.



STEP 3: MAKE IT SHAREABLE

Current donors are the best resources to help bring in new donors. They already believe in your mission and want to see it succeed, so you can tap into this enthusiasm by including easy ways to share email content through social media. Emails should include relevant social media buttons and even a line that explicitly encourages people to send the campaign to their friends, colleagues, and families. Our research shows that people are more likely to engage with content when it comes from a person they know or follow online, so make it easy to spread the word.

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STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT YOUR CTA WITH BUTTONS

Experienced marketers know that every email should have a call to action (CTA), but so many we see are either missing this crucial element, or it's buried in the text. Your CTA must be prominent and, we would argue, sometimes so visible it borders on being obnoxious. CTAs can be a large banner, text or buttons, and you should incorporate multiple CTAs within each email. (Remember that all CTAs in an email should drive the reader to the same next step – having too many options leads to inaction.) An email recipient should never read an email and wonder what they should do next; the email should tell them clearly and repeatedly. Once you've started using CTAs prominently and want to see which ones work best, you can implement simple A/B testing to decide.





STEP 5: BE RECOGNIZABLE

Studies have shown that sending emails from addresses that donors don't recognize or trust is detrimental to open and click-through rates. To cut through this clutter, you need to use a sender familiar to your audience – considering your various audience segments here may help, too. This will not only build trust in the email content but also reduce the chance the email will end up in the recipient's spam folder. In the case of cold emails, consider pairing a relevant name (either organizational or individual) with an introduction in the subject line. This, too, will add credibility to the content and improve open and click-through rates.

STEP 6: SEND AT THE RIGHT TIME

In all marketing, timing is critical. Yet, many great campaigns don't perform as well as they could because they are sent at the wrong time of day. The ideal way to figure out the best time of day is to send test emails and measure the conversion rates.



CONCLUSION

Email is a powerful marketing tool, but only when it's properly leveraged by fundraisers who know how to wield it. With these small tweaks to your next email campaign, you, too, can start to see great improvements in your email metrics and conversions. Getting people to engage with your emails doesn't happen without first understanding your target audience, applying these best practices, and then testing to see what really works. Happy emailing!

MAY WE BUY YOU A CUP OF COFFEE?

Let's chat about how we can custom-tailor strategies and solutions to help you meet your organization's most pressing goals. We cordially invite you to a **Coffee & Conversation** where we'll analyze any area of your direct response you'd like and share our recommendations in a complimentary 30-minute consultation and a one-page report that will help you take confident next steps.

Here are some popular Coffee & Conversation topics, but we're open to evaluate any area of your program. Let's chat!

Campaign Review

Give us your best, your worst, or your most challenging fundraising campaign along with your results report and/or audience insights and we'll provide actionable suggestions on ways to enhance your results.

Data Review

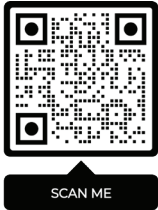
Let us uncover the hidden trends and takeaways from your program reports. We'll share our high-level insights on your trends (good and not so good) so you can make better-informed decisions.

Website Review

Are your site visitors taking the desired next steps? Pick our brains to explore how to best optimize your site, increase engagement and help you meet your goals online.

Production Review

Deadlines, set-ups, papers, lettershop and all things mail production. Let's explore where you can gain efficiencies and savings with your direct mail and print production.



Schedule **Coffee & Conversation** with us [here](#) or scan the QR code. We'll send you a virtual cup of coffee to enjoy – on us!

ABOUT CONCORD DIRECT

Great listeners. Great strategists. Great implementors.

Nonprofits rely on Concord Direct to advance their missions by building and activating audiences across direct mail, email, websites, online advertising and social media. Our data-driven strategies, expert creative, and efficient execution means that the investment you make in fundraising will deliver measurable impact.



To learn more, maximize engagement, and start reaching your goals, visit us at concorddirect.com.

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