

Engaging Donors at Every Level: A Checklist

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Nonprofit organizations have been navigating change in almost every aspect of their operations over the past two years, including shifting priorities, a new employment landscape, and changes in fundraising and hosting programs and events. As organizations continue to reimagine what their futures will look like, donor engagement strategies should be reevaluated and refined to ensure they keep up with these other changes. Consider the following steps to support strong donor engagement:

1. Remember that every donor counts.

Securing large, one-time gifts can be exciting (or even newsworthy) and help increase employee morale and engagement. However, efforts to attract bigger donors should not distract from also seeking out donors who — while contributing smaller amounts — may be willing to donate more regularly. Organizations can ensure donors feel appreciated throughout their giving cycle and find opportunities to solicit feedback to stay aligned with applicable donor preferences and expectations.

2. Review the donor experience.

Organizations can also take time to closely audit the donor engagement process from start to finish to determine if there are any pain points that could be smoothed out. Making sure website homepages clearly show visitors how to donate and reviewing the actual donation process can ensure it is as simple as it could be.

Time can also be invested toward analyzing available data. This includes determining which email content yielded the best results in a given period, and which pages on an organization's website have the highest traffic. This information is essential for successfully developing future campaigns.

3. Create a firm digital footprint.

Donors should be hearing and thinking about an organization throughout the year — not just when it is time to reach them directly. Organizations can stay on

their donors' radars by encouraging donors to follow them on social media and other channels.

However, a following is not enough. Consider generating content regularly to maintain a consistent presence on social media feeds and other digital channels. A robust content plan that aligns website and social media strategies can also ensure that all platforms are regularly updated with new content, updates, and calls to action. Organizations can consider setting aside a small budget line for cost-effective paid digital advertising campaigns that can be activated to promote specific initiatives each year.

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4. Diversify content.

Studies have found that the average attention span for someone consuming content is only eight seconds. Part of this is because of how easy it is to find the specific information we need at any time, and part of this is also due to the sheer amount of content being churned out every day. Organizations can consider how they typically convey information to their donor bases and how this could potentially be expanded. Could written content also be distributed as an infographic or a short video? Adding multiple mediums to a content strategy provides new ways to deliver information to an audience that make an organization stand out and maintain the audience's attention.

5. Encourage other types of support.

While the main goal of donor engagement is usually a monetary donation, organizations can consider other ways that donors can provide support and maintain

continued interaction. Are there ways that specific individuals or companies in specific sectors could lend their time or their subject matter expertise? Additionally, while donors may be wary of putting an organization directly in touch with their personal and professional contacts, consider encouraging donors to share messaging with their networks and creating materials that make it easy for them to do so. This can tremendously expand outreach and provide new leads that would have otherwise been inaccessible.

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Embrace the coming changes.

It's not just nonprofit organizations that are experiencing rapid change, but the overall mechanics of how people do business and interact with one another. Having a donation engagement strategy that reflects the changing times will prove beneficial to organizations who take the time to innovate.

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