

Non-Profit Fundraising During and After COVID-19

Nonprofit organizations, suddenly paralyzed by a new reality thrust upon them by COVID-19, are now asking the question: Can we fundraise? The short answer is yes and the longer answer is how. You may have noticed how abruptly advertisements for products and services by the for-profit sector evaporated as the pandemic inflicted staggering pain and suffering on people and communities. Businesses and Industries paused advertising even though they had at their disposal departments fully staffed with seasoned professionals. They took a breath to recalibrate for these times. Now you are witnessing the emergence of advertising for consumerism but with a much different tone and language. Fundraising is critical for the survival of nonprofits and the mission work of many of them is now more important than ever as we attempt to move people through this life-threatening crisis and into recovery.

Plan to Transform Your Fundraising Strategy

Form a COVID-19 task force to make a comprehensive plan to transform your traditional fundraising campaign style. Here are just a few broad things to address in that plan:

- **Focus on retention:** Work to move one-time givers to monthly givers and increase the gift amounts from your existing sustainers.
- **Expand your use of social networking** to nurture donor relationships and get creative with on-line engagement opportunities such as video conferencing events.
- **Vigilantly review your monthly donor reports** and immediately communicate with anyone who has lapsed or may lapse due to an expiring credit card, for example.
- **Be fearless with using new platforms** that reach into new audiences for an introduction to your work now that may lead to increasing your donor base later.
- **Regardless of your nonprofit mission,** continue to message your value and relevance, especially through stories shared by your donors.

Make The (Soft) Ask

So, for you all on the front lines and those working behind the scenes to provide comfort, care and helping people meet their basic human needs in your communities, it is absolutely okay to ask for gifts from your donor base, especially since your costs are probably increasing. You can make that case just use a softer ask which includes language like "if you are able". For those enriching lives through music, art and culture, ensure you remain an option for people wanting to give on your websites. Heighten your presence with unique engagement opportunities that illuminate your value. Perhaps a museum can offer a virtual tour or a cultural center can conduct a series of online cooking classes.

This is not a time for acquisition, so focus on retention and moving people into higher gift levels. Some people are still able to and will continue giving. Use loving and understanding language for those who may have to suspend giving in these times.