A NONPROFIT’S GUIDE TO
COURTING
THIRD PARTY DONORS
Introduction

Imagine you’ve been set up on a blind date by a friend. You decide to attend because you respect and appreciate your friend’s efforts. Plus, you’re curious.

Your organization goes on blind dates like this all of the time. When third-party donors attend your events and contribute to peer-to-peer fundraising pages, you make new connections. But just like a blind date, if you want to forge a lasting connection, the new relationship will need to stand on its own, without the help of your mutual friend.

What starts as a gesture of support for a friend or family member has the potential to develop into a lasting and fruitful relationship between this new donor and your organization.

In this guide we walk through the steps of a new relationship so you can turn third-party donors into lifelong supporters of your cause.
Chapter 1

Tell Your Story

The first step on a date is getting to know each other better. This typically involves a dialogue about common interests, past experiences, and future ambitions.

In the same way this step is important on a first date, it’s also important to your organization. In order to catch a third-party donor’s interest and keep it, you need to tell your story. And in order for your story to truly resonate, you need to tell that story well.

The first email you send to a new donor, usually to thank them for their contribution, is a good place to introduce your story.
Include These Key Elements in Your Story

- **The main character.** Your organization and the people you serve.
- **The villain.** What you’re up against.
- **What’s at stake.** What will happen if you do nothing?
- **Your reactions to the point of conflict.** What battles are you fighting? On what fronts?
- **Your results.** Where have you won? Where have you lost?
- **Your long term plan.** How are you going to win the entire war?

**Tips for Successful Storytelling**

**HAVE A HOOK**

To get a donor to learn more about your organization, you need to first get their attention. A great way to do this is to present them with interesting facts or shocking statistics. Is there something that your organization focuses on that you think the entire world should know? Get that fact in front of your third-party donors. While your first email to your donors should be a message of thanks, this message can also be used to draw them into your story. Tell them something they likely don’t already know in the body of the email to encourage them to click on a link to your website.

**PRO TIP**

Use limited text and layer in visuals to help prevent information overload.
CONNECT WITH RELATABLE DETAILS

Part of the reason we all tell our stories is to discover if we share core values and key interests with others. When someone's story strikes a chord, it’s a memorable experience. In order to be relatable to your new donors, show the faces of your organization. Give donors an opportunity to relate to your cause on an individual level. Introduce them to some of the people your organization serves, and describe how your nonprofit is inspired by the work.

Liberty in North Korea (LINK) uses images and blog posts to connect their supporters with the real stories of refugees helped by their organization.

"SHOW, DON’T TELL"

Your delivery in how you tell your story is also very important. Use language as a tool to evoke emotion and help third-party donors grasp the weight of the situation. For example, if your organization provides aid to cancer patients, don’t just tell third-party donors that the cancer patients you serve need help. Show your donors what their lives look like.

In this example, your donors should feel like your organization gives them a better understanding of what it means to be diagnosed with cancer. They should have an idea of what it’s like to be poked and prodded, to undergo surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation, and to spend sleepless nights in the arms of a loved one.

By using descriptive language that attempts to put donors in the shoes of who you serve, the gravity of the situation becomes much clearer. This strategy will also lend a sense of urgency to your messaging. These people need your help. The situation should feel very real to third-party donors.
ILLUSTRATE YOUR CONFLICT/VILLAIN

Make it clear what you’re up against and what it is you want to change in the world. In this case it can be helpful to show third-party donors what the world would look like if you neglected to take action. Statistics can be great here as a means of indicating the severity of the situation.

If you’re trying to defeat something, convey to your readers what steps have been taken to date. If your organization supports a new approach, or is collecting funds to find a new approach, explain how what you’re doing is different from what’s been tried before.

INSTEAD OF SAYING

“Cancer patients often undergo aggressive treatment.”

SAY THIS

“Cancer patients on average spend X amount of at the hospital. When they are not undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatments, they have to deal with countless needles and endless testing.”
CONSISTENTLY COMMUNICATE YOUR SPECIFIC MISSION

It’s helpful to think about your mission statement as the book jacket to your story. The description on a book jacket serves to both pique a reader’s interest and inform them about what is at the heart of the story. Fiction authors often write and rewrite their book jacket as they complete their story. So too should your organization write and rewrite your mission statement as your organization develops and combats your villain.

When a third-party donor searches for information about your organization, they should experience similar messaging about your mission across all touch points. Your website, social media pages, emails, and print materials should all showcase your mission as a focal point. Kindred Image offers a great example of this practice. Their mission is front and center on their website homepage.

![Kindred Image Website Screenshot]

**WE EXIST...**

**TO END CHILD ABANDONMENT IN SOUTH KOREA AND CREATE A CULTURE OF LIFE AROUND THE WORLD.**

**PREVENT**

We want to put an end to abandonment but believe that this begins in the hearts of the people. Through story-based awareness, we work to change the cultural consciousness for the cause of life.

**INTERVENE**

While working to change the surrounding culture, we meet mothers in crisis and offer alternatives to abortion and abandonment in unsafe places. Kindred staff members serve at the drop box site on a daily basis.

**RESTORE**

While engaging in crisis care, we also work to provide long-term solutions for single mothers and children left in the box. Through counseling, care packages, and adoption support, we are committed to holistic solutions.

**GET INVOLVED!**

DONATE  HOST A SCREENING  FUNDRAISE
Similar messaging is also found on their Facebook page.

**EXPLAIN HOW YOU’RE TAKING ACTION**

Give donors digestible information that helps them see your organization is good at what it does. Third-party donors should hear your story and say, “Wow, they’ve really thought this through.” They should feel empowered by your story, motivated, and compelled to help. In order to explain how you’re taking action,

- **Make information about programs, events, and volunteer opportunities accessible.**
- **Create and promote impact pictures** that visually shed light on your programs and affected individuals.
- **Send donors a report of what impact their specific contribution had.** charity: water, for example, sends a report back to their supporters after they track where each donation goes and the people it helped.
• **Create infographics.** Infographics are a great way to present donors with a substantial amount of important information in an easy to digest format.¹

### Takeaways from Chapter 1

• **Include all the main components of a traditional story** in your own. Explain the point of conflict, what’s at stake, and identify your hero, villain, plans, actions, and results.

• **Hook the reader** into your story with interesting facts and statistics.

• **Show the faces of your organization** to connect on a personal level.

• **Use descriptive language** that shows the reader your story rather than tells them.

• **Illustrate the severity of the situation** with statistics and paint a picture for the donor of what will happen if the problem goes unaddressed.

• **Make your mission front and center** anywhere donors might search for more information.

• **Communicate your action steps and impact** by making your information accessible and by using easy to digest images and reports.

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Chapter 2
Have a "Cool Factor"

Telling a great story isn’t always enough. Your date has to find you attractive, too. You need a “cool factor.” The same thing goes for attracting donors. Just like you would dress up for a date, you need to outfit your organization with the right look.

Bump up Your Organization’s “Cool Factor”

**WOW THEM WITH YOUR DESIGN**

Your logo and website design affect a donor’s perception of your organization. Present information in a clean, digestible, interactive, and visually stimulating way to ensure curious donors leave your website with a positive first impression.

Even the color scheme you use is important. Color allows you to subconsciously align your organization with different emotions. For example, this color emotion guide created by The Logo Company breaks down the emotions that are tied to each color.²

Remember, it’s also important for your design to be consistent across any tools or platforms you use. A visitor to your website should not later visit your Facebook page and wonder if they found the right organization. It should be visually obvious to them right away through the fonts, colors, theme, and layout. Great design takes great talent, it’s true. But there is a misconception that if you don’t have an enormous design staff, you can’t have great design. This is simply untrue. Kindred Image and Vs. Cancer are just two examples of organizations with talented one-man design teams.

Once you’ve nailed your design, make sure it’s not wasted on unresponsive pages. Imagine you’re at dinner with a friend and they tell you about this awesome organization they just volunteered for. After dinner, you’re still thinking about the organization as you walk a few blocks to your car. You pull out your phone and try to look up the organization. Alas, their website isn’t mobile responsive, and your first personal experience with that organization results in frustration as you try to adjust your screen.
ESTABLISH A TONE OF VOICE

Harriet Cummings at Distilled advises that tone of voice is what sets you apart from other organizations, and distinguishes you as your own entity. Your voice is the sound of your brand and the tone is the style of how the voice is delivered. Your tone of voice should inform all of your written content and communications. Choose a tone depending on how you wish to be perceived and what type of audience you want to attract.

For example, your tone of voice might be:

- Humorous
- Direct
- Scientific
- Humble
- Professional
- Clinical

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR VOICE

- Cummings recommends you write down your core values and the key words you would use to describe your company. Then look for these words around your office—in emails, notes on the fridge, conversations, and on posters. These words can provide direction and help shape your voice, especially if you have multiple writers contributing. Sharing these words will help to unify your voice and make it consistent.

- Read your content out loud. It’s easier to catch mistakes this way. It’s also easier to assess whether or not it’s something your organization would want a representative to say.

- Alternatively, Buffer recommends asking, “If our organization was one person, what kind of personality would it have?”

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CONNECT OVER COMMON INTERESTS

Despite the serious nature of the work you do, both your employees and supporters like to have fun. Just like active outings are a great way to meet like-minded partners, fun events are a great way to attract like-minded donors. Use an event as a catalyst to inform others about the work of your organization.

The annual Red Shoes and Brews dinner put on by Ronald McDonald House Charities San Diego is a great example of this. Donors buy seats at a table where they meet like-minded individuals, have a good time, sample locally brewed beverages, and learn more about the Ronald McDonald House’s services.5

CONSIDER GIVING OUT SWAG

Swag is a great way to stay top of mind after third-party donors meet you for the first time. Branded swag such as a T-shirt at a 5K with the name of your organization can be a nice way to thank someone for their participation.

According to Robert Rosenthal at Volunteer Match, “An artfully chosen item in the right hands can deepen and strengthen the relationship between a volunteer and a nonprofit, help advertise a nonprofit as a great cause or place to volunteer, raise awareness about issues, and give volunteers an easy way to show their community that they care.”6

5 Ronald McDonald House Charities San Diego, “Red Shoes & Brews.” https://rmhcsd.org/civicrm/?page=CiviCRM&q=civicrm/event/info&reset=1&cid=7
However, beware that some swag might make it look like you’re wasting donor dollars. You want to connect the swag to your organization in a meaningful way so it doesn’t seem random. It also helps if the swag is useful, such as a writing implement or an article of clothing, versus something considered disposable or unnecessary, like a poster or paperweight.

Your organization might also consider selling swag in the form of an online store. charity: water sells branded items on their site such as water bottles and t-shirts. This gives their supporters a chance to physically show their support and raise awareness.

7 charity: water Store. [http://store.charitywater.org/](http://store.charitywater.org/)
Takeaways from Chapter 2

- Design greatly impacts the perception of your brand.
- Identify your brand’s tone of voice and take actions to embody it in your content.
- Fun events are great ways to provide donors with more information in a casual setting.
- Thoughtfully selected swag helps keep your organization top of mind and can strengthen a donor’s connection with your organization.
Chapter 3
Call Them Back

Let’s say you have an amazing time but your date doesn’t call you again. Or worse, they bombard you with texts every five minutes ultimately making you uncomfortable.

As a nonprofit organization, it’s up to you to take the initiative to show you’re interested in pursuing a relationship, but you have to do so in a respectful manner. Communicate that you appreciate their donation and that you’d like to develop a deeper connection. Remember that it’s a two-way street, though. You should express interest in getting to know your donors in an open dialogue and not just spam them with information about you.

Tips for Following Through With Third-Party Donors

DON’T WAIT TO FOLLOW UP

To leave a lasting impression, send a follow up email to third-party donors right away. Thank them for attending/donating/volunteering and use this first touch as an opportunity to hook them into learning more about your story.
LiNK has an inspiring stance on their email interactions with supporters. They want every email they send to be the best email their donor has received that entire day.

Justin Wheeler, LiNK’s Vice President, recommends these tips for success:

- Try to make your donors smile.
- Write out 20 subject lines and have your staff vote on the winner.
- Don’t give too much away in the subject line.
- The subject line should take longer to write than the email itself.
- Have a direct and clear call to action.
- Keep it short and to the point.
- Track open rates, click rates, and conversions.
- Pay attention to when your donors open their emails and use that for targeting.
- Experiment!

**DO NOT ASK FOR A SECOND CONTRIBUTION RIGHT AWAY**

To increase your chances for success, progressively build up to your second ask. To do this, reinforce why your organization is valuable and show them the impact that their first contribution had. You can also send updates on important initiatives or noteworthy pieces of news from other organizations.

Cultivation events, which we discuss in chapter 4, are also great ways to interact with your donors without any donation pressure.
PRESENT SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES TO REQUEST MORE INFORMATION

Your level of communication after a donor’s first contribution is a balancing act. Some donors will want to get more involved right away, while others will want to get to know you more slowly. In order to cater to the different needs and interests of your third-party donors, present them with several different opportunities to read more about you in your follow up emails.

Offer a way to subscribe to your newsletter and to your blog. Highlight your website and social media pages in your communications as well to provide donors with the tools they need to stay in touch with you should they choose.

When your donors do subscribe to your newsletter, Vertical Response recommends sending at least these three emails before your second ask:8

- Welcome email
- “Did you know?” email
  - Use this email to educate subscribers about your cause.

• **Exclusive offer for newsletter subscribers**
  
  - Offer a special deal to make subscribers feel special. For example, you could offer subscribers early access to purchase tickets to your next event.

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PRO TIP

Avoid overwhelming third-party donors and aim to keep your email communications limited to one message per week. Of course, we encourage you to use your best judgment if you have reason to support a different approach. Once a week should keep your organization top of mind while allowing your recipient time to open and digest the new information.

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**Takeaways from Chapter 3**

• **Follow up with donors right away and make it the best message they’ve received all day.**

• **Develop each relationship before asking for a second contribution.**

• **Present donors with several avenues for learning more information** so they can keep in touch in the way they find most useful.
Chapter 4
Make Them Feel Special

In the dating world, when your friend sets you up with another friend, he or she might tag along to make the introduction. They proceed to spend the first half hour catching up and they barely acknowledge you. The audacity!

First impressions are everything, even for nonprofits. Make sure you acknowledge third-party supporters the very first time they interact with your organization. Be it at an event, or through a peer-to-peer campaign, take the time to welcome newcomers to your cause. Let them know how much you appreciate their time and support.

Use These Tips to Go Above and Beyond and Make Third-Party Donors Feel Special

THANK THIRD-PARTY DONORS IN A WAY THAT DELIGHTS THEM

A handwritten note of thanks goes a long way these days. Receiving a personal note in the mail from a member of an organization is unexpected. While donors might expect a thank you email, it’s likely not going to actually surprise them. The fact that someone at your organization took the time to sit down and write them a note of thanks, on the other hand, is sure to delight.

Shout-outs on social media are also a great way to make your third-party donors feel appreciated. Call out donors on your page to let them know their contribution or attendance did not go unnoticed.
You can also comment on donor’s contributions in the comments section of a peer-to-peer donation page. When they donate to support a peer-to-peer fundraiser, thank them for their contribution and let them know how much of a rock star you think they are. Donors might expect a thank you comment from the fundraiser they have donated to, but a thank you from the organization is sure to make them feel even more important to the cause. Make sure you consistently thank donors to peer-to-peer fundraising pages and let donors know that no contribution is too small.

**BE PERSONAL**

Say thank you as a member of your larger team. For example, instead of writing a thank you letter and signing it as your organization, use first person and write your name and title while speaking on behalf of your organization.

This one-on-one connection humanizes your organization and sheds light on the individuals behind your larger cause. When a third-party donor is thanked by an individual they are more likely to feel like your organization took special time out of their day to acknowledge their contribution. People want to connect with people, and a personal message is a great way to make these connections. Nonprofit Marketing Guide recommends using personal language in the opening of your thank you note, such as “you made my day,” or “your donation came across my desk today....”

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9 Nonprofit Marketing Guide, “Nine Clever Ways to Thank Your Donors.”
http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com/resources/fundraising/nine-clever-ways-to-thank-your-donors/
GET CREATIVE IN YOUR THANK YOU

Imagine You’re Writing a Greeting Card

Nonprofit Marketing Guide offers many suggestions for getting creative with your thank you approach. They recommend you think of a thank you like a greeting card, not a business letter. This will help your message come across as warm and friendly, rather than impersonal.

Say Thanks Visually With Video

They also suggest creating a video message. Video is a great tool to showcase your team and an unscripted message is a great way to add a candid element to your message.

Give Third-Party Donors a Ring

Mix things up and say thanks to some of your donors with a good old-fashioned telephone call. Don’t catch your donor on the phone? Leave a message saying you just wanted to give them a personal thank you for their time and contribution. Let them know they made your day and that if they ever have any questions that they can always reach you personally.

Invite Them to Hang Out

Send third-party donors an invitation to a “non-ask” event, or cultivation event. This serves as an opportunity to engage new donors in a casual setting without any pressure to further contribute to your cause. Cultivation events are used to provide more information about your organization and mission in a creative and relaxed way. A common example of a cultivation event is an open house. Invite third-party donors to a social gathering and use the event as a way to say thanks and get to know their interests.
and lifestyles. Donors will also have a chance to get to know your staff, ask questions, and pick up educational materials. The Fundraising Authority recommends making the events on the shorter side, 60 to 90 minutes long with only 10 to 15 minutes of talking from your organization.10

After the event, the Fundraising Authority suggests following up with every single attendee and asking them what they liked about your organization and what they think you could be doing better. Then, you can close your conversation by asking if the attendee would like any additional information about getting involved.

Takeaways from Chapter 4

- Thank donors in creative and personal ways to make them feel special and appreciated.

- Cultivation and non-ask events can be used to develop a lasting relationship with a third-party donor by creating a low pressure environment.

10 The Fundraising Authority, "How to Hold a Non-Ask Event." http://www.thefundraisingauthority.com/fundraising-events/non-ask-event/
Chapter 5

Be Available

Everything went according to plan: you met, you got along, you followed up, and you’ve even had a few conversations with your new friend. Lately, however, when you call them, all you get is their voicemail.

When your organization’s information isn’t readily available to third-party donors, you lose the opportunity to hook them into your story and develop your relationship. Your information should be easily accessible in every location a donor might think to search for you.

Your website is a 24-hour resource for your donors. Keep information up to date and be sure to link to all other important information sources on your page. Your nonprofit website should not only have your donors and volunteers in mind, but also the media. An easy-to-navigate site will make it easy for reporters to find information about your organization, often in the form of media kits, and share your story, according to Smashing Magazine.  

Keep These Tips in Mind When Optimizing Your Nonprofit Website for Your Readers

TELL YOUR WHOLE STORY

While your mission should be front and center, your website is a place for you to tell your entire story. Information on your website’s home page should be kept to a minimum to keep the experience clean.

Smashing Magazine, "Non Profit Website Design: Examples and Best Practices.”
and concise. However, an “Our Story,” or “About Us,” page on your site is a great place to provide your donors with interesting background information. Bring your readers behind the scenes. Tell them about the hearts and minds from which your organization was born. Give them the chance to see the impact of your programs. We all love to root for the underdog. Regardless of your organization’s standing today, at one point in its lifetime you were that underdog. Revisit those feelings, and let your supporters be a part of what that felt like, and what it feels like today to be working for your cause.

A blog is also a great tool for telling your story as it unfolds day to day. Nonprofit organization To Write Love on Her Arms (TWLOHA) does a great job at covering a variety of topics and keeping their blog up to date.\(^{12}\) Let your supporters know what kinds of conversations you’re having. Share pieces of inspiration to develop a sense of camaraderie.

**SHOW THEM WHO YOU ARE**

Let supporters see the faces of your hard work. Include pictures of all or key staff members and dedicate a page to your board members as well. These introduction pages are also a great place to provide individual contact information. Consider including fun tidbits about your staff members. The easier it is for a visitor to connect with your organization, the easier it will be for you to develop a lasting relationship with them.

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\(^{12}\) To Write Love on Her Arms Blog. [https://twloha.com/blog/](https://twloha.com/blog/)
HIGHLIGHT YOUR IMPACT

Use impactful images to show how your organization is helping to make the world a better place. Provide visual descriptions of what different dollar contributions translate to in terms of impact for your cause.

Here, Heifer helps donors mentally frame what their contribution means in terms of community impact.

Additionally, be sure to be transparent with your financials and goals. Make your annual report easy to locate on your website and make it engaging.

PROVIDE RESOURCES TO GET INVOLVED

Offer ways to volunteer and get involved. Many third-party donors may feel eager to help and yet feel they lack the ability to financially contribute to your organization. Even if your organization is

not able to offer any type of boots-on-the-ground volunteer opportunity, you can still ask supporters to fundraise on behalf of your organization.

Takeaways from Chapter 5

- **Develop your website and social channels to serve as thorough resources** for donors looking for more information.

- **Inspire donors to get more involved** by sharing your origin story. Give curious donors background information in an “About Us” page.

- **Highlight your staff members on your website** to humanize your organization.

- **Be transparent** in what contributions to your cause translate to in terms of impact.

- **Make it easy for your supporters to get involved** – give instructions for how to physically volunteer or fundraise online.
Chapter 6
Be Social

Social media platforms have changed the dating landscape forever. The ability to stay constantly connected impacts our communication expectations. You might see that your blind date just updated his or her Facebook status but they haven’t texted you back. Did they forget about you?

Social media is a great way to stay in touch with your third-party donors and remind them that you’re happy to have met and look forward to engaging again soon. With social media platforms, you can provide donors with real time information and offer shout-outs of thanks.

Social platforms also serve to legitimize your organization. Imagine an excited donor visits your page and finds you haven’t posted in weeks. Your social engagement spawns further social engagement. A donor will feel less inclined to ask a question or follow or “like” your organization if your account is inactive. They may even wonder if you are still operating at all if your social presence is not up to date. An active page instills confidence in your supporters and says, “We’re active, accessible, and on it.”

In order to leverage social tools with your third-party donors, you need to make a connection to begin with. At your initial point of contact, encourage third-party donors to follow you on your social channels, and then ask again in your email communications.
Use These Practices to Build Your Following and a Sense of Community on Social Media

BE STRATEGIC

The size of your following also speaks to your organization’s credibility and value. According to the network effect, the larger a network, the more valuable it becomes.14 Facebook would not be valuable to one user alone. A third-party donor is more likely to create a connection with your organization if you already have a developed following.

The same goes for your individual following. Each additional follower lowers the cost of acquisition for the next follower by validating your organization and growing a network of likeminded individuals.

ASK FOR HELP SHARING YOUR CONTENT

Every team member in your organization can contribute to the expansion of your social network. Ask team members to share your organization’s page with their followers and to retweet any content posted by your organization.

Every follower also contributes to the expansion of your social network. Each time they like or share something, your organization gains exposure with new individuals. Don’t just push out content, ask for engagement. “Like our recent blog post? Share it with your followers!” Literally asking for help is always an option. You can aim to make your posts more shareable so that they speak for themselves.

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A great example of something “shareable” is TWLOHA’s inspirational quotes and images they post on Instagram.

Social media contests are also a useful tool to grow your following.15

TIPS FOR RUNNING A CONTEST

• Select a prize that is relevant to your organization and that will attract valuable followers. For example, if your organization has an annual event coming up, offer a pair of tickets as a prize.

• In exchange for the prize, ask participants to share a photo with their following, tag your organization in the photo, and use your organization’s name in the caption. For example, if your organization helps animals, ask your following to share a picture of an important animal in their life.

• Be upfront with how a winner will be selected. Disclose if the winner will be selected at random or if their photos and captions will be judged on certain criteria.

• Don’t limit the contest to your existing followers. Call out the contest in your newsletter and on your website and ask new supporters to become a follower and join the contest.

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15 JCSM, “12 Ways to Get More Fans on Your Nonprofit Facebook Page.”
http://jcsocialmarketing.com/2014/02/12-ways-get-fans-nonprofit-facebook-page/
CREATE A COMMUNITY THAT THIRD-PARTY DONORS WANT TO BE A PART OF

Share the Spotlight

Post content that features other organizations and relevant articles, so that your followers will see you as a reliable source of industry news. By using your platform to talk about things other than yourself, your followers will view your posts as useful and informative, rather than spam-y.

Foster Dialogue

Think of social media as your virtual “town hall.” Your social channels are a great place to facilitate conversations and request feedback. There is strength in numbers, and your network’s feedback could lead you to try something new and improve your initiatives.

Takeaways from Chapter 6

- **Develop a strong following on social channels.** This legitimizes your organization in the eyes of third-party donors and is a great tool for open dialogue.
  - Create shareable content and ask for help.
  - Contests relevant to your organization can organically increase your following.

- **Use your platform to share a diverse mix of relevant content.**
Asking for a second date can be nerve wracking. You feel confident about moving forward, but wonder if the other person feels the same way. You start to worry that you might seem too eager, but then you wait too long before following up.

When your organization feels you have developed strong initial connections with your third-party donors, it’s time to ask for their support again. Ask third-party donors to attend another event, to make a second donation, or to consider creating their own peer-to-peer fundraising page in your upcoming campaign.

In order to make sure your second request hits the mark, you should personalize your approach for each donor.

**Here’s How**

**CELEBRATE MILESTONES**

For example, LiNK touches base with their donors on the anniversary of their last donation. This reminds donors of why they originally donated and how it felt to contribute to the cause.

A donor's gift anniversary is also a good time to let them know what your organization would be able to achieve if they gave again at an increased level.
In addition to reminding donors of their previous contributions, you can show them that their gift made a difference. Here, buildOn lists what they were able to achieve with the help of their supporters.

**USE DATA TO SEGMENT YOUR LIST**

By using a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software such as Salesforce, your organization can track and analyze donor data. This data can then be used to segment your donors into categories.

Here Are a Few Things to Look for in Your Donor Data

- The last time they donated
- The amount of their last donation
- The total number of donations they have made
- The frequency of their donations
- The last campaign or program they donated to

This information can then be used to segment your donors into lists that allow for targeted messaging such as,

- “We miss you,” messaging to donors who haven’t contributed in over two years.
- “Become a recurring giver,” messaging to donors who contribute more than once in year.

You can also use this information to inform your communications with each donor individually, such as when you remind them of the anniversary of their last contribution.
Takeaways from Chapter 7

- **Use positive reinforcement** to encourage your supporters to contribute for a second time. Remind them of past donations and what their help meant to the cause you serve.

- **Collect and analyze data to better inform your communications.** Segment your list of donors and send messages specific to their behavior to increase your chances of resonating.
Chapter 8
Going Steady

You’ve gone on a few dates and developed a real connection. You think the relationship might even have the power to last, so you decide to take a leap and ask, “Wanna go steady?”

As a nonprofit, you’re ready to ask your donor to get more involved and to become someone your organization can really depend on for support. This translates to a monthly recurring giving program as it creates a predictable, sustainable revenue stream for your organization.

In order to build this group of regular donors, you should target specific groups who are most likely to get more involved. For example, target people who have donated a few times in the last year who are not part of your recurring giving program. Send them specific communications that suggest how becoming a member of your recurring giving program will improve the quality of their relationship with your organization.
To show the mutual benefit of your recurring giving program, show the donor what’s in it for them. Pencils of Promise raises four great points for why recurring giving should appeal to donors.¹⁶

- It’s affordable
- It’s a community
- It’s sustained support
- It’s exciting

Spell out for donors what a predictable monthly contribution would mean for your organization and for your cause. Additionally, consider what special treatment you can provide your members to make them feel important.

For example, Pencils of Promise also illustrates what members of their monthly giving program, PASSPORT, will receive:

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¹⁶ Pencils of Promise, “Passport” [https://pencilsofpromise.org/passport/]
Kindred Image gives their monthly donors exclusive communication updates and a special thank you depending on the size of their gift.

- **Donors who give $25** or more per month receive a handwritten thank you note from Kindred Image’s development director.
- **Donors who give $100** or more per month receive a letter opener in the shape of a sword, symbolizing the protection of valuable lives.
- **Donors who give $250** or more receive a letter from Pastor Lee and a customized print.

**Takeaways from Chapter 8**

- A monthly recurring giving program provides your organization with a predictable revenue stream.
- Clearly express the many benefits of joining your program in order to encourage frequent donors to become recurring givers.
Conclusion

Third-party donors are the key to expanding your organization’s reach and impact. By following these stewardship practices, you can take advantage of every new connection your current supporters make on your behalf.

When you expand your stewardship practices to third-party donors, you position your organization for exponential growth. Celebrate every third-party donation as an opportunity to develop a meaningful relationship that will bring your organization to the next level of serving your cause.
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