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Non-Profits: 7 Marketing Tips to Engage Donors for Year-End Giving

By: Cultivate

Tis the season for end-of-year giving. As the year ticks to a close, non-profits know that donors open their wallets. Securing end-of-year giving is critical to start next year off on the right foot. It's the most generous time of year for many donors who are eager to give before they close out this year's taxes.

Use these **7 marketing tactics** to reach out to your donors and ensure you make their "nice list" this year-end giving season.

1. Make a Personal Connection

Engage your donors with campaigns that speak to them. Warm fuzzies are big: you're looking to make them feel important, connected and involved. Let each donor know their gift has made your holiday season special and how their donation will help make next year great, too. Be sure to let them know **EVERY GIFT COUNTS**, from the platinum supporters to those who can only afford a small gift.

2. Don't Wait...Reach Out NOW

To make your end-of-year giving plan a success, reach out to donors NOW. Give them a chance to donate on **#GivingTuesday** (the Tuesday after Thanksgiving). Help your donors realize WHY your non-profit is a great spot for their end-of-year donations. Focus on holiday giving (Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year, etc.) and give it to them straight: it's a perfect moment for your donors to continue to support your organization, return if their donations have lapsed, or start to give for the first time.

3. Social & Email Marketing are Your Friends

Every great marketing plan starts with raising **awareness** and promotion, before you start your campaign for **consideration**. Reach out to your potential donors, lapsed donors, friends and followers on social media. Increase your tweets, posts, emails and points of contact.

NOW is the time to launch your [targeted email marketing campaign](#). Touch donors and constituents with emails providing helpful tips, interesting facts and useful information, and engage them with stories and wrap them in the mission of your organization. A weekly or bi-weekly email will ensure your donors feel reconnected *but not overloaded*. Supplement your

email campaign with robust social media posts. Automate your posts, if you must, so you can manage the frequency, [but carefully monitor](#) as well.

4. Don't Rule Out Direct Mail

Should you [go the direct mail route](#), keep on top of industry best practices and use them at your disposal so your letters and mail pieces really stand out. All mail should be brand-consistent, catchy and capture a story or convey a message to your donors *right away*. Show them how necessary those end-of-year dollars are and tell them exactly how you plan to steward their gift and put it to good use.

5. Ensure Your Website is User-Friendly

It is absolutely [critical your website is user-friendly](#) with a BIG donation button, especially during this busy season.

If a potential donor stumbles onto your site from your Facebook post, your Twitter feed, or through a link in your email campaign, you must make it ***crystal clear and convenient for them to donate***.

Read more: [End the Year with a Bang: 5 Ways to Rock Your Non-Profit Donation Page](#).

Your website should have a clear call-to-action. This is where **engagement and acquisition** take place. Offer multiple convenient ways for your donors to give. Consider PayPal, credit cards and any other methods you can promote to make it easier and faster to make gifts. You should **include your call to action** in every post, every email and in your direct mail campaign.

6. Your Stories are the #1 KEY to More Donations

Your site should be consistent with your brand, [tell your non-profit's stories](#) and showcase all the great ways you serve your community. Use video, photos, quotes and testimonials that warm the heart and connect. Stories that reflect your mission, vision and values make strong and powerful cases for support. Our brains are hard-wired to respond to stories—especially when we're charity-focused and thinking of goodwill towards mankind.

7. Love & Appreciate Your Donors

When a donor takes the time to give to your organization, they should feel like Bruce Wayne, Bill Gates, and Oprah all rolled into one. Even if it's a small gift, every donor needs to know that the time they took to give was noticed and appreciated. Repeat donations happen because the giver feels they were acknowledged and sees the impact of their donation.

Retention should be a major part of your end-of-year plan. Don't put it off until January. Keep those donors! Thank them for their one-time gift and offer them the chance to make it a gift all year long. For some donors, a thousand dollar one-time gift seems daunting, but an \$83 gift each month is much easier to manage. Give your donor easy ways to repeat their performance and give again and again.

Create opportunities for **advocacy** with your message. Never underestimate the power of a hand-written thank you, a phone call from a board member or even a personalized email. Include a story about the impact that the donor's gift has had on your organization and how you couldn't accomplish your goals and achieve without it. Tell your donors all the ways their gift keeps on giving.

With a little time and attention you can rock your year-end giving campaign. Keep yourself focused on the stages of marketing: awareness, consideration, acquisition, retention and advocacy. We call it **Growth Cycle Marketing** and it's just as critical for non-profits as it is in the for-profit world. Keep your message mission-focused and use an organized, strategic plan to ensure your end-of-year giving campaigns are successful!

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