



CHARITABLE GIVING KC

Connecting Hearts & Minds

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In our Connecting Hearts and Minds emails we share articles and resources with you that we think will enhance your nonprofit knowledge database and give you ideas for your own nonprofit work based on our experience.

Strategies to Engage and Maintain the Modern Donor

Ask yourself, is my organization taking the steps to modernize our donor outreach? Are we doing a good job managing our donor relationships in the digital world? Chances are that you are struggling in these areas, many nonprofits are in fact. The COVID 19 pandemic has made these issues come into sharp focus for many nonprofit organizations. Modernization and the movement to donor relationship management in the digital world became more important than ever before because it was one of the few ways to communicate.¹

A recent survey conducted by OneCause, showed that "the vaccine status of donors, their families and fellow attendees is a big factor in whether individuals will attend in-person fundraising events."³ Approximately 51% of survey respondents said they would need to be vaccinated before attending an event and 35% said all event attendees would need to be vaccinated before they would attend an event.³ So even though in-person events will slowly be coming back, many donors are expecting nonprofits to continue to deploy both virtual and in-person strategies. So how do we do that and still genuinely connect with our donors?

Tip #1: Personal Touch

As you already know, personal touch is key in making a donor feel appreciated. In the past we have been able to rely on our fundraising events and in-person meetings and strategies to connect with donors, however, now we are relying more on phone calls, letters, and emails and trying to connect through webinar based activities. One easy tip is to **send a voice message** through texting or social media, or making a **quick personalized video** using your phone and sending it to a donor. Something as simple as, "Thanks Bob for signing up for our monthly pledge today. We really appreciate your loyalty as a donor." It's unexpected and adds a personal touch donors are probably not getting from every charity. **Handwritten letters** are also another way to show you are putting in the time and effort to care about your donors and is a throwback method that our older donors especially greatly appreciate.

Tip #2: Segment your donor database for personalized outreach²

You may not have any idea what this means in terms of your email marketing software, but likely you have already been somewhat segmenting your donors by how much they donate, what campaigns they donate to, and the like. Segmenting your donor database in your CRM software is one way to make sure the "right" donors are getting the "right" emails for them and the ones that interest them the most, thus engaging them more.

For example, you could **segment your list by their communication preferences**. If they have indicated they prefer a phone call vs. an email or maybe they want a text message, then communicate with them in that way. It shows you are listening and your message will likely connect better since they have previously indicated that is they prefer to be contacted.

You could also **segment your list by gift size or type** so that your fundraising letters reflect an understanding of what support the donor has already given to the nonprofit and also with what they would be likely to give next time. For example, if you have a donor who typically donates \$10 to your yearly fundraising event, a letter requesting them to donate \$25 this time would be more effective than sending them a letter requesting \$200.

Lastly, consider **segmenting your list by supporter type**. Most nonprofit organizations have a wide variety of supporters ranging from recurring donors to major donors or from volunteers to event or program attendees. Obviously if an individual has engaged with you in that way before, then they are likely to be open to doing the same in the future, thus bringing them closer into the fold of the nonprofit and connecting with the organization better.

Up Next? Stay tuned for our next *Connecting Hearts and Minds* article to help you learn some creative strategies to engage your donors!

Sources

1. ["Tactics to Modernize Donor Outreach," *Legacy Leaders*, 2021](#)
2. ["5 Strategies to Engage and Maintain the Modern Donor," *Elevation*, 2021](#)
3. ["Most Social Donors Say They Will Be Ready to Resume In-Person Fundraising Events Soon," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, 2021](#)

Here are additional resources about this topic that you may find helpful:

- ["Tactics to Modernize Donor Outreach," *Legacy Leaders*, 2021](#)
["5 Timeless Strategies to Engage and Maintain the Modern Donor," *Elevation*, 2021](#)
["Most Social Donors Say They Will Be Ready to Resume In-Person Fundraising Events Soon," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, 2021](#)

Quote of the Week

"When you have more than you need, build a longer table not a higher fence."

Unknown Author

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