2022 flew by, didn’t it? We’re not sure how it’s already crunch time here in the nonprofit sector, and yet, here we are. Again.

As busy fundraisers, you already know that December 31st is the biggest giving day of the year. While other businesses are slowing down and closing up shop, nonprofits are working hard to maximize donations with year-end appeals. But with all the hustle and bustle this time of year, who even has the energy to partake in more fundraising activities?

Busy fundraisers, like you—that’s who. And The Year-End Giving Guide for Busy Fundraisers is here to take the pressure off and make fundraising a breeze. This simple guide exists only to help our fundraising friends end the year with the biggest bang while exerting the least amount of energy.

Let’s get started!
To get your fundraising from "un" to "done", we're taking the why-what-who-when-how approach to create a 3-part email campaign for your year-end fundraising appeals.

**Why: Your main objective**

First, you must determine your why, aka, why you want to raise the funds this year-end (see: purpose). This could be as easy as using your mission statement, but we recommend getting even more specific and linking your year-end appeal to a specific program/service that has an emotional tie.

**TAKE ACTION**

Identify the main purpose of your year-end campaign and the impact it will have. This exercise will help you maintain a targeted message throughout your campaign.

Take a moment to think about your main purpose.

Now write out your 3 impact statements.

1. ________________________________

2. ________________________________

3. ________________________________

**REAL WORLD EXAMPLE**

This year-end, [Nonprofit] is giving back to the community and ensuring low-income families can enjoy hot meals during the cold days via our Heck Yeah! Meals Program. This program will 1) ensure no family goes hungry this winter season via donated goods from our constituents, 2) raise awareness of the food scarcity issues in rural areas, and 3) boost confidence and hope in low-income children who rely on meal services.
What: A 3-part email marketing campaign

Funraise's minimalist, no-frills approach to year-end fundraising consists of developing an impactful 3-part email campaign. Three emails. That's it. Distributed to your chosen segments (more about that in "Who").

While it may be tempting to launch a gnarly campaign with all the bells and whistles, you just got done doing that (hello, Giving Tuesday), and your donors and supporters just gave. While we would never shun a thoughtful peer-to-peer campaign, our goal is to help you raise the funds during this super busy time of year, not your stress levels.

That's why we've made it easy for you by creating a simple messaging structure for you to follow.

**TAKE ACTION**

Those purpose and impact statements you just drafted? Here's where they come into play. Follow the template below to help you draft your 3-part email series.

**Email 1: President's Message + Year-End Launch**
- Thank you for support from the president/CEO/ED
- Announce year-end appeal with your purpose and impact statements
- Call to donate

**Email 2: Program Spotlight/Story + Cheery Greeting**
- Program spotlight and/or a personal story from the recipient of services
- Brief holiday/warm-n-fuzzy message (depending on your audience)
- Call to donate

**Email 3: Last Appeal + Tax Write-off Shout Out**
- Reminder of purpose and impact statements
- Mention tax write-off benefits
- Well wishes for 2023 or enthusiastic send-off to 2022
- Call to donate
Who: Your donors, of course!

But not just any supporters. To get the biggest bang for your buck this giving season, segmentation is going to be your best friend. Break down supporters to find out who’s already donated this year, who’s committed to recurring monthly donations, which supporters ran peer-to-peer fundraisers, and who still needs to donate in 2022.

**PRO-TIP:** If you decide to send appeals to people who’ve recently donated (like Giving Tuesday donors), you’ll want to reframe your messaging so you’re not lumping them in with the same folks who haven’t given at all during the year. The same goes for high-net-worth individuals—consider setting a higher suggested giving amount on a special Donation Form for those folks so you’re not missing out on valuable funds!

**TAKE ACTION**

Review the donor analytics in your CRM to determine the top three donor segments you want to reach. And make sure your lists are tidy and up-to-date. Even if you decide to send your appeals to your entire donor database, freshly-cleaned lists will help you increase deliverability, reach, and impact. (It’s a fact!)

**List your top 3 segments to target for your year-end appeal.**

1. 

2. 

3. 

When: A December to remember

You’ve heard of power hour, but this is a power month! A month of fundraising goodness and hopefully a month that ends with donations out the wazoo. Here’s a timeline for distributing your year-end appeals at peak giving impulse moments.

Email Marketing Timeline

- Send week of December 12th—President’s Message + Year-End Launch
- Send week of December 19th—Program Spotlight/Story + Cheery Greeting
- Send December 30th—Last Appeal + Tax Write-off Shout Out

How: Automation, automation, automation

To make year-end fundraising a breeze, we’re gonna let you in on a little not-so-secret—email marketing automation. Scheduling all your emails at one time will be your saving grace. That’s because all you’ll need is a day or two to set everything up, then you can go about your business and check in at strategic times to engage with donors and review the status of your campaign.

TAKE ACTION

This is when all the previous steps come into action.

1. Build your emails using the messaging and topic structures in the “Why” and “What” sections.
2. Segment your donors based on the audiences you selected in the “Who” section.
3. Schedule your year-end appeals using our timeline in the “When” section.

Boom! Year-end appeal in the bag.

PRO-TIP: Connect your fundraising platform with your donor CRM and your email marketing platform to segment and send your emails without a hitch.
We know what you’re thinking, fundraising friend—it can’t possibly be that simple to develop a year-end fundraising campaign. We’re here to tell you, oh, yes it is! Not everything needs to be difficult. Sometimes taking a no-frills minimalist approach is just what the doctor ordered. Take all that extra time you saved to sit back, relax, and revel in the loved ones around you as the donations roll in.

PS. We understand that a minimalist approach to fundraising isn’t for everyone. If you’re looking for more of a maximalist approach, you can use that “free” time to Do The Most with our checklist below.

The Do-Too-Much 8-Step-Checklist to Doing the End-of-Year Most

Do you have Do The Most Syndrome? If you never feel like you’re finished; if you’re like a reality-show-chef plating til the last second... yep, you Do Too Much. But why stop now? Here are some things you can do to scratch that doin’ it, doin’ it, doin’ it all itch.

1. Share your 2023 goals today.

Why wait? Whether you’ve exceeded expectations in 2022 or are seeing the well dry up, don’t focus on how the year has gone for your nonprofit; focus on the need you expect to see in 2023 and your plans to eradicate it.

2. Thank donors, even when they give less than expected.

Times are difficult for everyone. You understand if how—or how much—your donors support you needs to change. Use this as an opportunity to engage and retain donors, instead of being upset at their lack of support.

3. Explore eligible yet unmatched gifts throughout the year.

84% of donors are more likely to make a gift if they know their employer will match it. And if they don’t have cash on hand, remind them of this: Many employers agree to match their employees’ donations for several months after the initial donation is submitted.

4. Pick up what they’re putting down.

Donors surveyed in DickersonBakker’s 2022 Donor Insight Study expect the economy to create a higher need for nonprofits, which is a motivating factor for donors. Don’t shy away from clearly telling donors about the need you fulfill and how their gift will make a real difference. Break down your programs and make impact cards for the most conversions.
5. Be a crystal ball for donors.

Personalization—or personal-sounding interactions—are coming in hot as part of the next wave of consumer support and communication. Get a jump on donor expectations by setting up a chatbot on your nonprofit’s website, and create answers to donor FAQs to save your team time and your donors frustration.

6. Provide a giving experience that instills confidence.

Just because we’re nonprofits doesn’t mean we’re begging for a handout and it doesn’t mean that our websites should be less than stellar. Give your donors every reason to trust your org with a smooth, secure, consistent giving experience from the first click to the last.

7. Automate the donor outreach process.

If you're looking to increase donation revenue while saving time and effort for your team, automation is the answer. We already discussed segmentation, but using a rules-based task system with interaction tracking (native in Funraise!) ensures enhanced donor engagement.

8. Turn your attention to up-and-coming donors.

According to DickersonBakker, donors under 45 have a more optimistic view of the economy, and therefore are more likely to support nonprofits. Now is the time to engage this donor group where they spend time: email, social, and community-based digital fundraising.

9. Remember: Consistency is your friend!

Don’t give up on your donors. The economic strain of 2022 may have affected your donors’ financial situation or how they directed their generosity. But 2023 is a fresh start, and December 31 isn’t a dead end. Get ready to do the most, rolling year-end activities into new year results!
A funding awesome year-end

Can we get sappy for a minute, nonprofiteer? Our wish for your organization this giving season is strategic success, sure, but also that your tenacious focus and world-changing impact are recognized in ways that keep you inspired. Step by step, you are creating a greater world than any of us can imagine. And that... that is funding awesome.
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