funraise

The Year-End Giving Guide for Busy Fundraisers

And in a flash, 2023 is drawing to a close. It's hard to believe that it's already crunch time again in the nonprofit sector, and yet, here we are.

We don't have to remind you that almost one-third of nonprofit giving happens in December and December 31st is the biggest giving day of the year. You know; you're still tired from last year. Indeed, 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 straightforward guide is your ticket to ending the year with the biggest bang while exerting the least amount of energy.

Sound good? Good. Let's get started!

To get your fundraising from "un" to "done" as quickly and easily as possible, we're taking the why-what-who-when-where-how approach to create a three-part email campaign for your year-end fundraising appeals. Then, if you want, you can repurpose it for other channels. No fuss, no muss, no long hours spent in the office when you just want to get home to those leftovers.

Why: Your main objective

First things first: you need to figure out your "why," AKA why you want to raise funds at this very moment. This could be as easy as repurposing your mission statement, but we recommend getting a bit more granular and linking your year-end campaign to a specific program or service that will resonate at this time of year.

TAKE ACTION

Identify the main purpose of your year-end campaign. Then, determine your financial goal and consider the potential impact for your clients, your community, and your organization. This exercise will help you maintain targeted messaging and use specific numbers throughout your campaign.

Take a moment to think about your main purpose. Then, write it below.

_____

Then, write your monetary goal for your year-end campaign below.

_____

Now, write down three potential impacts of achieving your objective.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What: A 3-part email marketing campaign

Funraise's minimalist , no-frills approach to year-end fundraising consists of developing an impactful three-part email campaign. Three emails. That's it. You distribute them to your chosen segments (that's what the "Who" section is for!), tweak them for any other chosen channels (that's the "Where"), and go on your merry way.

While it may be tempting to launch a super-snazzy campaign with all the bells and whistles, you just got done doing that (hello, Giving Tuesday!), and your donors and supporters just gave. We would never shun a wide-reaching peer-to-peer campaign or community-building event, but our goal here is to help you raise the funds, not the blood pressure.

If you're ready to start writing, just personalize the three AI prompts below with Funraise's AppealAI.

TAKE ACTION

Those purpose and impact statements you just drafted? Their time has come. Use them to personalize the AI prompts below and write effective and efficient campaign text for your three-part email series.

Email 1: President's message + year-end launch

Write a **[number range]**-character email for **[nonprofit name]**'s year-end fundraising campaign from the perspective of the organization's **[ED/CEO/president]**. Announce the campaign by highlighting our goal to **[insert main purpose]** and let donors know that their support will **[insert relevant impact statements]**. Thank **[donor segment]** for their support and end with a call to donate, linking to **[insert Funraise campaign site URL]**. The tone should be **[insert 2-3 brand voice attributes]**.

Email 2: Program spotlight/story + cheery greeting

Write a **[number range]**-character email for **[nonprofit name]**'s year-end fundraising campaign, focusing on the following **[program/person]**. Include the following information: **[insert relevant details]**. Include a brief message wishing everyone a happy and healthy holiday season, and end with a call to donate, linking to **[insert Funraise campaign site URL]**. Use the email above as a point of reference. The tone should be **[insert 2-3 brand voice attributes]**.

Email 3: Last appeal + tax write-off shout-out

Write a **[number range]**-character email for **[nonprofit name]**'s year-end fundraising campaign, highlighting the year-end campaign and its mission to **[insert main purpose]** to **[insert relevant impact statements]**. End with a call to donate, linking to **[insert Funraise campaign site URL]**, and send everyone warm wishes for 2024. Use the email above as a point of reference. The tone should be **[insert 2-3 brand voice attributes]**.

Who: Your donors, of course!

But not just any donors. 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, who ran peer-to-peer fundraisers, and who still needs to donate in 2023.

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!

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 your three emails on the following dates:

- Week of December 12th: President's message + year-end launch

- Week of December 19th: Program spotlight/story + cheery greeting

- December 30th: Last appeal + tax write-off shout-out

Where: Via email ... and also social media

If your to-do list is already bursting with items, just send the three emails we've discussed, and get back to everything else. You've done your fundraising duty! That being said, if you want to cover a little more ground this December, it's easy.

Head back to Appeal AI, pop in those emails, and ask your friendly robot colleague to rewrite them for whatever social media channels you want. While you're at it, you can also ask for text-to-give campaign assistance. It's that simple! Just remember to review everything with a careful editor's eye before clicking "post."

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 AI prompts in the "Why" and "What" sections.

2. Segment your donors based on the audiences you selected in the "Who" section.

3. Spread the word according to the "Where" section.

4. 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.

And if you still have some extra time (LOL) and want to really amp up the year-end fundraising? We've got you there, too. For fundraisers looking for more of a maximalist approach this December, you can do the most with our checklist below.

Your Do-It-All Checklist to Doing the Year-End

If you're the type that always goes above and beyond, here's a checklist to scratch your do-it-all itch while giving your year-end fundraising some extra oomph.

☐ **Share your 2024 goals today.**
Why wait? The future is here, so focus on all the amazing things you'll do in the year ahead (with your donors' support, of course).

☐ **Go beyond the email.**
This is a do-it-all checklist, and everyone loves a handwritten thank-you note (or personal voice message) during the holidays. Turn it up to 11!

☐ **Make the most of matching gifts.**
Over $7 billion (with a 'b') in matching gift funds goes unclaimed each year. So, dutifully follow up on any eligible but unmatched gifts.

☐ **Give first-time donors extra attention.**
If they gave once, they can give again! Whether it's a survey, an event, or a call, give first-time donors your call with personalized follow-up.

☐ **Get chatty**
Cultivate a more personalized donor experience—and save future-you a lot of stress—by setting up a chatbot on your nonprofit's website and creating a donor FAQs page.

☐ **Perfect the donation experience.**
The actual giving is an integral part of the donor experience. Give your donors every reason to trust your org with a smooth, secure, consistent giving experience from the first click to the last.

☐ **Automate the donor outreach process.**
We already discussed segmentation, but using a rules-based task system with interaction tracking (native in Funraise!) means enhanced donor engagement with no extra effort on your part.

☐ **Don't sleep on the next generation.**
Set your nonprofit up for long-term success by engaging the younger generation of donors now. Find them where they spend their time: across social channels, on email, and via text.

☐ **Get your welcome kit in order.**
You're sure to have some new first-time donors this December. Make sure you're giving them a warm, retention-boosting welcome with a clear follow-up plan for one, two, and four weeks after their first gift.

☐ **Jazz up your homepage.**
More donations = more traffic to your homepage. So, why not make it the best version of itself? Make sure everything looks fabulous, put your mission and impact front and center, and make that donation button easy to click.

☐ **Be consistent.**
Don't give up on your donors. A new year means a fresh start, and the giving doesn't end on December 31st. Get ready to do the most by rolling year-end activities into new-year results!

YOU'VE GOT THIS!

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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Raise more for your mission

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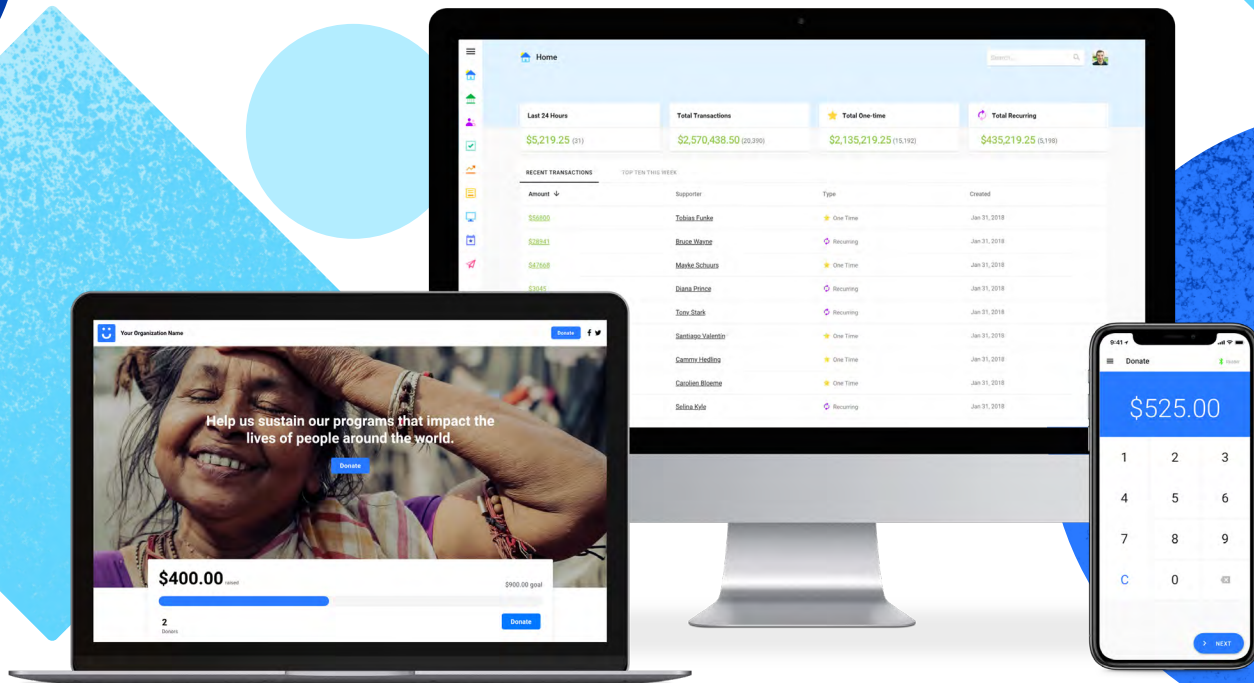
FUNRAISE

- Donation Forms
- Donation Pages
- Recurring Giving
- Fundraising Websites
- Fundraising Page Templates
- Peer-to-Peer Fundraising
- Events & Ticketing
- Text Engagement
- Social Fundraising

ANALYZE

- Donations
- Donors
- Subscriptions
- Reports & Dashboards

AUTOMATE

- AppealAI
- Emails
- Tasks
- Company Matching

MOBILE APPS

- Funraise App
- Donor Portal App