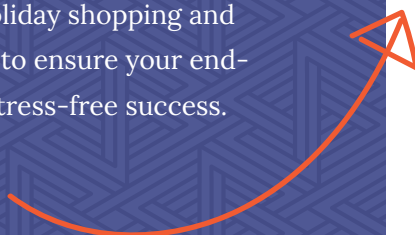




10-Point Checklist to a Fruitful Year-End Fundraising Appeal

Nonprofits know that the most common time of the year for donors to open their proverbial checkbooks is December, so make the most of your best opportunity to fundraise by preparing early (AKA right now, friends). Leave the mad scramble for your personal holiday shopping and *follow this roadmap* to ensure your end-of-year appeal is a stress-free success.



Determine SMART goals.

What does it mean to be SMART? Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. For example, are you looking to decrease cost per dollar raised, increase donations from new donors, increase average gift size by XX amount or lose no more than a specific percentage of donors?



Set your budget (and stick to it).

Consider the ROI of your campaign. Investing wisely allows you to reach more people and create greater impact.

Give yourself a 5% cushion to allow for unexpected costs and be realistic. Use last year's numbers as a benchmark and determine cost per dollar raised by dividing the total cost by the total raised. As a general rule, aim to spend no more than 16 cents per dollar raised.



Gather your team.

Ask board, staff, friends, family and regular donors to give early and help you gain momentum by recruiting their contacts. Have them donate on your campaign page and leave encouraging public messages (even if they only give \$1). Encourage service recipients to motivate their friends and family to donate too. You should recruit them individually and personally via email and phone.



Prepare your mailing list.

Get your list as clean as possible. Build in extra time to run your contacts through [NCOA](#) (National Change of Address) processing so you're not wasting precious dollars on printing and postage to supporters who have moved.

Learn more in [Intro to Email Marketing](#).



Develop your creative concept.

What story are you trying to tell? Numbers don't always resonate or create the desired emotional impact to compel action. Use storytelling to connect how their financial contribution will impact your mission and tell human-centered stories that will mobilize through emotion.

Check out more [year-end appeal storytelling tips](#) from fundraising expert Lori L. Jacobwith.



Ensure your website is up-to-date.

82% of donors will visit your website before giving ([Nonprofit Hub](#)) and 50–70% will abandon your form when redirected offsite to complete the transaction ([npEngage](#)). Your website must do a great job telling your story while also [incorporating key functionality](#) like built-in online donations, branded fundraising pages, recurring gifts and the ability to ask donors to cover transaction fees.



Produce your creative assets. Consider both copy and graphics for:

- ☐ Direct mail
- ☐ Email
- ☐ [Social media](#)
- ☐ [Website](#)
- ☐ Digital ads
- ☐ [Video](#)
- ☐ [Blog](#)



Strategize your thank-you process.

Send immediate thank-you emails and personal solicitations to give and share via phone, email and by tagging on social media. Send a mass email the day after your campaign ends to thank your community. Tell them how your campaign went, celebrate your success and show your appreciation.

For more thank-you tips, check out these [9 mistakes nonprofits make thanking donors](#) from our friend and partner, Claire Axelrad.

Learn more in [Intro to Email Marketing](#).



Incorporate crowdfunding tools into your campaign.

People like to support what everyone else supports. Display your goal on your [campaign page](#) and aim to raise your thermometer 30% through internal gifts and a soft launch with committed supporters before you publicly launch your campaign.



Closely record gifts received.

Implementing a [good donor database system](#) that integrates with your website will make it easier to track donations and engagement, prepare your list next year, measure retention and send timely follow-ups.

From beautiful website designs and donation processing to powerful landing pages and email marketing templates, you have the tools to make your year-end fundraising campaign a success. One client raised **\$730,000 in online donations** through their Firespring website in 2018.

**WATCH
NOW!**

Watch this quick video
to see how you can maximize
your website tools and grow
your organization.