



Ramp Up Your Mailing List to Reap More Funds

Target donors for more effective fundraising.

By Rachel Flanagan

If you call the people on your donor list, 25% of your donors will give more money, studies show. If 25% of your donor base is 5,000 donors, and each of them gave \$50 more, that would be \$250,000. That's real money!

But fundraising efforts like this depend on your target donor list. Contact information needs to be kept constantly up to date. That can be a real challenge when resources are already limited.

Online tools like Whitepages (whitepages.com) can help you search for mailing list members' missing contact info such as current addresses, phone numbers, e-mails, and more. In addition, below are some simple tips to help ensure that you're reaching the right audiences and that your contact lists are updated and accurate.

On your website's home page, include a way for visitors to sign up for updates (or to receive an e-mail newsletter and other content) by providing their name and e-mail. Make sure it's easy for visitors to respond to this call for action. You may also want to include it on high-traffic pages, including "About Us" and "Contact Us."

Ask people to select the type of information they'd like to receive. Online forms to gather e-mail and other contact information can include lists where people can select the content that matters to them most: fundraising

“Ensure that people receive the information most relevant for their needs.”

events, volunteer opportunities, press releases, media articles, and more.

Gather geographic information. These online forms can also include geographic information, which can help you tailor mailings based on people's location. This information can be particularly useful when you want to invite people to attend local and regional fundraising events.

Gain permission. One important reminder about e-mail marketing is to make sure that you gain clear permission during the signup process. New subscribers should be aware of exactly what e-mails they're signing up for. Gaining permission not only helps build relationships but in some countries (including the U.S.) it's legally required.

Segment your list. Target the right person with the right information.

Just as you might group your personal contact list into different groups (close friends, family, co-workers, etc.), it's important to segment your nonprofit's mailing list to

“Tailor mailings based on people’s location.”

ensure that people receive the information most relevant for their needs. Some suggestions for ways to segment a list could include:

- active members
- inactive members
- active donors
- first-time donor vs. repeat donor
- member to donor track
- volunteers
- members by interest
- how members were acquired (e-mail, website, fundraising event, etc.)
- demographic information (location, age, etc.)
- activity-based (specific campaigns or interests).

Offer a bonus or reward for joining your mailing list.

Providing access to premium online content like white papers or e-books, or physical items like a tote bag or bumper sticker, can encourage website visitors and potential donors to share their contact information and join your mailing list. In one example, it was found that offering a free online course in addition to signing up for a newsletter increased conversion by 47.2%.

You don’t have to reinvent the wheel with entirely new information when offering content as a reward. Existing resources like blog posts, Q & A’s, and case studies can all be repurposed and given new life for other audiences. 

Rachel Flanagan manages corporate branding and recruiting at Whitepages (whitepages.com), an identity verification provider and people search engine that helps you contact, research, and verify people in your world.

More Ways to Raise Funds

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Simple Tips to Nail Your Online Fundraising (Vol. 38, No. 1)

Improve Your Direct-Mail Outcomes With Advanced Analytics (Vol. 38, No. 2)

Harnessing the Internet to Raise Funds (Vol. 31, No. 2)

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