

Simple Tips to Nail Your Online Fundraising

Convert web visitors into donors with these foolproof tactics.

By Gail Perry

Why don't nonprofits receive more online donations? One reason is that many nonprofit websites – and especially donation pages – are really awful.

Of course, yours isn't awful. But you can still work on these must-do strategies to make the donation process easier for online visitors. Doing so will amp up the volume of gifts people give. Try these quick, state-of-the-art tips to encourage online giving.

1. Be sure your organization's home page has a highly visible donate button.

Time and again, people visit a nonprofit website and have to hunt and hunt for the donation button. If they do finally locate it without giving up, it's in tiny gray (unreadable) font, tucked away in a long list with items like "Volunteer," "Our Programs," "About Us," and other scintillating information.

Ask yourself this: What's your website's objective? It should be to engage people who visit, capture e-mail addresses, get people to sign up, and above all, get people to take action *now*.

So make your donation button easy to find. Put it in its own separate space.

2. Turn your donation button into a large call to action.

Don't just say "Donate" Or "Give now!" Instead, connect would-be donors with the impact of their gifts.

Your donate button needs to say "Help a kid today" or "Clean up a stream today" or "Send help now." That's how to turn your donate button into a fundraising asset, not a liability.

3. Edit down your donation page. The fewer boxes the better.

Studies show that people will abandon a donation page if it looks complicated. Every box you add will result in more people leaving without giving.

So do you really need a salutation box? Do you really need the "Make this gift anonymous" box? Clear the clutter and you'll raise more money.

4. Add video – on your home page, on your "make a gift" page, on the page with the donation form.

Video is the new language of web fundraising. A video about your organization's impact can convert web visitors into donors quickly. A video on your "make a gift" page explains how the donor's money can make an impact. And add a



“Video is the new language of fundraising.”

video or image on the donation-form page itself to make it warmer and more encouraging.

5. Make sure you have a lovely thank-you page – use a video on that one too!

Far too many thank-you pages are full of legal information about taxes and 501(c)(3) organizations and such. Think of the donors who have just made emotional gifts because they feel bad about those students who don't have school books, and they're thinking about their own love of books and what it felt like when they were kids – and you dump cold water all over their good feelings. You sock them in the face with your legalese and tax info.

Give your donors a warm, fuzzy thank-you page after they give. Make them happy that they've joined your cause. 

Gail Perry, MBA, CFRE, inspires nonprofits around the world with cutting-edge fundraising strategies and new tools to make fundraising more successful and more fun. Find strategies to help you raise money at gailperry.com.



More Smart Strategies

For more details on how to raise money online, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

The Best Way to Tell Your Organization's Story? Capture It on Video (Vol. 35, No. 4)

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

How to Measure Online Fundraising Success (Vol. 26, No. 1)

Two Surprising Ways to Broaden Your Reach Online (Vol. 32, No. 4)

The Five Biggest Website Mistakes Nonprofits Make – and How to Avoid Them (Vol. 29, No. 5)

Online Strategies for Year-End Fundraising (Vol. 31, No. 3)