

TOP TIPS

Online Fundraising Campaign

1. Before you start your campaign consider and agree:

- What you want to communicate: What exactly is the key “hook” to draw people’s interest to the campaign?
- How you’ll promote your campaign: Once you’ve got a nice-looking online fundraiser home page, what are you going to do to get people looking at it?
- What the timeline will be: What’s your deadline, and what are the intermediate goals along the way?
- How much money do you want to raise in the first week or month?
- What are your benchmarks for success, to help you know that you’re making progress?

2. Build your case for support in a way that engages your potential supporters with the people that they will be helping. People like to give to people, not necessarily to a logo or organization or cause. Put a human face on your online fundraising campaign. For example:

If you are raising money to catalogue documents, show real people’s stories with, including the people that will view and benefit from the documents when they are more accessible.. Make it as personal as possible, tying supporters into the people that will benefit from the funds they contribute.

3. Prepare a short video for your campaign. Online video is a powerful method to introduce your campaign to potential donors, because it gives them the ability to see and hear about your cause in a more intimate way. For example:

Keep it simple – you don’t need a fancy camera – a mobile phone video is fine; it doesn’t have to be edited or polished. Just make something that is visceral and real, that shows your supporters how their money will make a difference.

4. Set a realistic goal. Your supporters want to be a part of causes that are achievable. Running multiple small, very specific campaigns geared around specific objectives is much better than one, monolithic campaign with a large overall goal. Online fundraising is especially geared toward small, achievable goals – people like to see that their small donation is helping to “move the needle” and make progress; people like to see the momentum building toward the fundraising goal.

Also, as part of your goal setting, be transparent in letting supporters know exactly how the funds will be used.

- 5. Keep your campaign duration short.** Your campaign should be as short as is appropriate for your need; shorter campaigns create a sense of urgency. Online fundraising campaigns are especially well suited for short-term, specific goals – your online fundraising effort should be fast and efficient and result in a quick influx of money, not a long-term slog.

If you need to do a longer campaign, such as for a capital project, then consider setting up a master campaign that has the entire goal, and creating any number of smaller fundraisers that feed into it. Doing this will allow your supporters to see tangible progress along the way to reaching the total goal. Be sure to offer to accept recurring contributions for long-term campaigns as well.

- 6. Focus on the right channels.** Instead of blasting your campaign all over the Internet, you need to focus on a few social media networks and other online channels that are most appropriate for your audience. Take a close look at your network (online and offline) and decide what channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, e-mail, or offline tactics like “snail mail” or phone calls) will be most effective for reaching each group.

- 7. Spread the word.** Once your campaign is up and running, it’s time to tell the world about it! Ideas include:

- Send an e-mail to your mailing list
- Notify your Facebook fans and Twitter followers
- Make a promotional YouTube video
- Consider “old-fashioned” mail – postcards can be a quick and easy way to notify people about the start of your online fundraising campaign
- Contact local press with a press release

Keep in mind that promoting your campaign doesn’t stop with the launch – it’s an ongoing process for as long as your campaign is live.

Keep your supporters updated about the status of your campaign.

Update your page regularly to let supporters know how it’s going, what you’ve accomplished, what you need, and keep building a sense of momentum and excitement, from day one until the final deadline.