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Editor's Note

These days, it seems like everywhere you turn, people are talking about the importance of Web site marketing and keeping pace with technology. Sometimes it's helpful to take a step back and just breathe. Remember: The heart of your work lies in your desire to support your causes — and more often than not, fundraising is a big part of that. This month, let's get back to the basics.

This is also the last month to take our annual State of the Nonprofit Industry Survey. Learn what other nonprofit professionals are focusing on and where your organization stands. [Take the survey here](#).



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Blackbaud's Third Annual State of the Nonprofit Industry Survey

With more than 1.5 million nonprofits in the United States alone — where does your organization stand? We invite you to take part in the third annual [State of the Nonprofit Industry Survey](#), sponsored by Blackbaud. Fill out the survey to find out what other nonprofit professionals are focusing on and for a chance to win a new Dell™ computer. [Take the survey here](#).

Back to Basics: Fundraising Online or Offline

Money is personal

Being asked for money is a very personal thing. It can be easy to forget that when you're sending out an email message to 5,000 people at once. But to your donor (or prospective donor!), you're actually infiltrating his personal or professional email account, requesting that he give you a portion of his hard-earned money. Be honest in your emails — it helps constituents feel genuinely connected to your cause.



What's your goal?

If you can't articulate what you hope to accomplish, you risk missing out on valuable support, and you even take a gamble on the likelihood of fulfilling your mission. Before you begin asking anyone for anything, you need to define your goal. You might want to rescue 200 homeless animals. Maybe you're starting a capital campaign in order to build a new wing for the hospital. No matter the goal, it's important that you know it and have the ability to explain it clearly to potential

supporters.

Who should you talk to?

Once you have a clear objective, you should use it to help determine who you should talk to. Certainly, some types of goals or objectives are better received by certain segments of your supporters than by others. One-time supporters of your animal shelter might be perfect to target with an appeal to help save a cat. Likewise, a volunteer who has been loyal but has a limited income might not respond well to a conversation about a major gift.

How should you approach them?

Your next step is to think about your approach. We all know that face-to-face conversations or solicitations often work very well. Technology, however, offers additional avenues that some constituents appreciate or even prefer. A simple email requesting a lunch or another face-to-face meeting can be a good starting point. It helps if you track constituent preferences so you can make sure you communicate with them in the manner they prefer.

What should you ask for?

One of the most important pieces of the puzzle is what you should ask for. If you know you're talking to the right person in the right way and have a clear end-goal in mind, you should also have an individual goal for each supporter. Your goal might not involve money, but instead it might simply be to cultivate relationships in hopes of garnering future support. Regardless of what you decide to ask for, technology can help tremendously. Whether or not you have a designated prospect researcher or research department, you can gather information about your supporters to help better target your request. There are a variety of prospect-research sites and resources out there that are free, so you can learn about different kinds of assets your supporters might be able to contribute.

Don't stop with "thank you."

The check has been deposited and the receipt and thank-you letters were sent — but you're not finished yet! Expressing your gratitude should never really end. It's more about cultivation rather than just a simple "thank you." After thanking someone for a gift, you should continue to demonstrate your appreciation. You might start with a phone call, a handwritten note, or even a thoughtful email. You could later send along a note — whether by mail or email — with an interesting or timely article that demonstrates how the supporter's gift helped accomplish a certain cause. You can also post a designated section of your Web site just for your supporters. Offer them news about upcoming events and include them regularly in communications, such as traditional and electronic newsletters. If you keep thinking of them, they'll keep thinking of you.

Eight Things to Ask For (Other Than Cash)

Believe it or not, it isn't always about money. Your organization can benefit in many different ways from your constituents' support. So when you're thinking about what to ask them for, remember that it might not always contain a dollar sign.

1. Planned gifts

Many people are in a situation today that prevent you from making much of a monetary gift to your organization. Perhaps a long-time volunteer is on a fixed income. Maybe you know a young couple who just started a family. Or maybe one of your board members just made a major gift to another organization (gasp!). These people might not currently be in a position to offer you money, but you should educate them about planned giving. Your Web site is a great place to offer resources on what planned gifts entail and how they help



your organization.

2. Time

Some people can't afford to give money to your organization regularly (or even at all) — at least, not right now. If you continue to solicit them for gifts, you risk alienating them. For this group, you can target them (both online and offline) with opportunities to give their time to your organization rather than money. Targeted email appeals and specialized volunteer content on your Web site can be a great and timely way to reach out to your volunteers and other supporters with upcoming volunteer opportunities.

3. Gifts-in-kind

There's probably quite a bit your organization could use in addition to the items already budgeted. Someone may have leftover building supplies you could use. Or you might consider asking for gently used equipment to help furnish your soup kitchen. Your Web site is a great place to post an up-to-date "wish list" of items your organization needs. Over time, you'll see an emerging pattern of your best gift-in-kind givers, and you can then target them specifically with future requests. You could even help arrange a swap meet for them to trade items with each other — as long as they bring something for you too!

4. Tell a friend

You might have heard the phrase "viral marketing," which is a term that stands for the tendency for messages to travel quickly via word of mouth. Encourage your supporters to help spread the word. Chances are, if they like and support you, some of their friends, families, or colleagues might too. Once again, your Web site is a great place to include reminders like this. Your supporters can forward your electronic newsletters to their friends for you. You can also include "share this page" or "share this article" links on your Web site encouraging visitors to help give you exposure.

5. Take action

Some organizations rely on supporters to help spread the word and further the mission. Some even ask supporters to take action, such as call or write a congressman on behalf of the organization. Through whatever channel it may be — traditional newsletter, email, or your Web site — offer your supporters a way to help.

6. Register for an event

Keep your supporters informed about upcoming events so they can register and potentially invite others to attend. It's easy to include information in a newsletter or on your Web site offering ways to participate in special events. Plus, if it's on your Web site, you can keep the latest and greatest information about your events in a place where your supporters can access it at their convenience, not yours.

7. Sign up for a newsletter




Traditional and electronic newsletters are a great way to communicate information to a large group of people at once. You can also include many different types of information: news and announcements, upcoming events or volunteer opportunities, special offers, and more. With each newsletter, you can reach out and keep these supporters engaged and knowledgeable about your organization.

8. Keep you in mind for next year

Sometimes people just can't afford to give you support; financially or otherwise. Stop spending your hard-earned money on targeting the wrong people — but don't write those people off either! Your organization can benefit from finding inexpensive ways of keeping them engaged, such as through email. If you continue to include these people — even if only once or twice a year — you continue to show them the value of the work your organization does. People frequently live based on a budget, and philanthropic giving might not be included in it. It never hurts to ask to be included in next year's budget. If you continue to show them value and attention, they'll be more likely to reward you in the future!

Use this list as a starting point, and then get creative. When people believe in your mission, they'll appreciate that you have provided them with creative ways to show their support.

Latest and Greatest

 web seminars	 in the news	 resources
<p>An Introduction to Fundraising Right Learn how Fundraising Right can increase the effectiveness of your personal solicitation methods, fully engage your board members, and build a customized, sequential plan for growing your organization's annual campaign.</p> <p>June 15 , 1:00 p.m. ET June 20, 3:00 p.m. ET</p> <hr/> <p>Raise More and Cut Costs Come learn why The Raiser's Edge® is the only fundraising solution you'll ever need.</p> <p>June 20, 3:00 p.m. ET</p>	<p>The Changing Face of the Donor The changing nature of donors was the topic for this edition of <i>Executive Session</i>, held in Atlanta during the annual conference of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Read the highlights from that discussion here.</p> <hr/> <p>Test Your Nonprofit I.Q. Are you up to the task? This article features a quiz to help ensure that you know basic but critical information about fundraising, leadership, boards, and other relevant nonprofit areas. Take the test here.</p>	<p>Online Gift Donor Profile Read this Blackbaud Analytics study that outlines trends in donor behavior to help the nonprofit industry understand who the best prospects for online giving are. Read the entire study here (PDF 639k).</p> <hr/> <p>Ten Tips for Funding Technology There are no silver bullets when it comes to fundraising, especially during tough economic times. Here are 10 tips to help you find the funds you need to implement and sustain your critical technology strategy. Read the entire article here from techsoup.org.</p>

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