

Nonprofit Information

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The Power of Acknowledgement – Three Elements of Donor Retention

Setting the Table for Year End Donations: Keep Giving Going After #GivingTuesday

While it might seem like summer just ended, it is not too soon to start planning for Thanksgiving – and Giving Tuesday. While developing a unique and impactful Giving Tuesday campaign is essential to making the day a success, nonprofits also need to keep in mind the preparation and follow up that will lead to valuable, long-lasting donor relationships. So, this year as you make your Thanksgiving plans, take advantage of the holiday cheer and prepare your nonprofit's table for new year-round giving traditions.

One Turkey Meal is Never Enough: Showing Gratitude Keeps Giving Tuesday Donors Coming Back for More

Just as it is important to make sure there is enough food for satisfying leftovers the day after Thanksgiving, nonprofits must ensure they have strong donor management and retention techniques in place to help carry Giving Tuesday donors into the next fundraising year. How a nonprofit proactively communicates with, engages and thanks donors can improve donor retention and impact lifetime donor value. Reaching out solely to show appreciation without asking for another gift makes donors feel valued and often results in increased giving over time. According to Penelope Burk in her book, *Donor-Centered Fundraising*, thanking a donor after their initial gift, can lead to a 40 percent increase in donor retention. Regardless of whether a nonprofit makes thank you calls, sends letters or acknowledges gifts through email, they must make sure to include relevant and authentic information that is of interest to donors. Sharing stories that illustrate how their gift will make a difference shows donors their true impact. Additionally, it is important to make sure donors have a way to reach nonprofits with questions and feedback on their donation experience either over the phone or in a survey. Constructive feedback can improve an organization's efforts and let donors know the nonprofit is listening.

Make Sure Your Table is Set & Ready for Extra Guests: Prepare and Educate Personnel for the Influx in Donations

No matter how much work you put into the turkey, Thanksgiving dinner won't be a success without having enough food to satisfy your hungry guests. As Giving Tuesday grows in popularity, nonprofits need to prepare by having adequate staff resources on hand to support timely deposits of funds, accurate data capture and swift donor acknowledgement. One way to ensure thorough preparation and eliminate some of the hassles of staff management is to outsource to a response management firm. Bringing in a third-party can

provide the necessary support for the wild swing in donations, while freeing up nonprofit staff to focus on the organization's mission...not only during the busy holiday season but throughout the year.

Beat the Black Friday Rush: Start Preparing a Process to Protect Donations and Donor Information

In order to properly handle the holiday rush, it is necessary to prepare early and thoroughly. During the holidays, increased retail traffic has led to notable security incidents – and nonprofits are vulnerable to the same threats. Trust is more crucial than anything in the effort to maintain and nurture donor relationships, so nonprofits must be able to ensure that donor gifts and information remain secure during the busy holiday season.

Physical security is the most important aspect of protecting donor information. Complete 24/7/365 surveillance is critical for safeguarding donations and donor information; this includes security cameras, GPS technology for mail movement from the post office to the processing facility, and photo ID badges and background checks for all staff. Next comes data security. Data security software including firewalls, antivirus software, spam, spyware, and data-loss prevention software can track where threats originate and make it easier to combat issues if they do occur.

In addition to adopting these security processes, nonprofits need to be compliant with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS). PCI DSS guidelines can help nonprofits and their donation processors ensure they are securely handling credit card gifts. They provide a framework for prevention, detection and reaction to security incidents. By preparing for the aftermath of Giving Tuesday now, nonprofits can have holiday gift processing and acknowledgment programs, security measures and the appropriate resources in place come December 1 to help ensure donating to your organization is an ongoing tradition for first-time givers.

As a helpful resource, we encourage you to take Merkle Response Management Group's [donor retention assessment](#) to determine if your nonprofit is ready to retain lifelong donors this holiday season.