



30-Day Spring Fundraising Plan

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"Spring is the time
of plans and projects."

— *Leo Tolstoy*

Spring is in the air! You've made it through another cold, dark winter and are ready to tackle the joys and energy of spring. Your donors are feeling happy and generous. What better time than now for a fundraising campaign?

Whether you're launching a new initiative, dovetailing with your annual gala, or wrapping up your fiscal year in June like many nonprofits, a spring campaign is a great time to engage and renew donors, attract prospects, build awareness, and plant the seeds that sustain your organization. Use this step-by-step guide to plan and execute your spring campaign and raise more money before summer begins.



Why a spring campaign?

A spring fundraising campaign can be a great way to energize your supporters mid-year. Many nonprofits end their fiscal year June 30. A spring campaign can be the boost you need to ensure you end your fiscal year in the black. It can also serve as part of your donor retention strategy and reinforce an organization-wide commitment to fundraising while recruiting, maintaining, and expanding your donor base.

Use a spring campaign to:

- **Relate your message to donors using their preferred method of contact.**
- **Optimize and expand your reach through multiple channels.**
- **Maximize your overall fundraising strategy.**
- **Generate more revenue than with stand-alone fundraising appeals.**
- **Benefit the entire organization, regardless of your size or status.**

Set your spring fundraising campaign up for success by following the timeline and steps in this guide.

🕒 *30 Days before campaign kickoff*

Analyze and Report on Fiscal Status

Review your budgets and accounts before finalizing your spring campaign. This will be essential to your campaign's success. Create a realistic view of what budget shortfalls or surpluses mean and how they might relate to your mission, operations, strategic plan, and current and future capacity building.

Your fiscal analysis should answer the following questions:

- 1) How has our organization's financial snapshot changed in the past year?
- 2) Do we have any unmet financial needs?
- 3) How will our spring campaign affect current and future operations?
- 4) How can the spring campaign advance our mission?
- 5) How will the revenue generated affect capacity objectives?

🕒 *28 days before campaign kickoff*

Review and Update Your Case for Support

A spring campaign cannot be effectively launched without evaluating the status of each element vital to your organization and its operations.

What programs or operational functions are not happening because of a revenue shortfall? How is fundraising or resource development underperforming? If you have a revenue surplus, what will happen with programs and operations as a result? Compare your annual strategic plan with what actually happened over the past 12 months. This should reveal any gaps in performance versus objectives.



Three things to consider before designing your campaign:

- 1) If your mission is truly driving operations and advancing the strategic plan, how much revenue is required to maintain the momentum?
- 2) If there is a surplus, where can funds from your spring campaign be applied to improve services and programs or expand capacity?
- 3) Are additional action plans needed to maximize the impact of a successful spring campaign?

Reviewing your fiscal status, operational needs, and comprehensive strategic plan lays a good foundation for a well-planned, highly effective, donor-centric spring campaign.

 *25 days before campaign kickoff*

Establish Action Plans

When it comes to campaign design, what works best for one type of nonprofit could be the wrong approach for yours. To create the most compelling spring campaign that will generate the greatest impact—financial, engagement, awareness—consider your fundraising and nonfundraising objectives, and then answer the following questions:

- 1) What are you trying to accomplish?
- 2) What would the ideal results look like?
- 3) Whom are you trying to target?
- 4) What do you most want them to do for your organization?
- 5) What call to action would motivate your target audience?
- 6) Would a one-time donation or recurring gift raise the most funds?

Budget

As ideas emerge and evolve, you will need to establish a budget for your campaign. If you already have a spring campaign written into your budget, great! If not, now is the perfect time to start planning. What resources do you need to create the kind of campaign you have in mind? Are those funds available? Can your board members, an individual donor, or corporate sponsor help close the gap?



Scope

Only you can decide how big or small your campaign should be. But it's important to think about and define the scope of what your nonprofit can (and can't) do to generate the best results.

- Who will you target?
- When and for how long?
- How will you engage prospective donors?
- What communication channels will you use: direct mail, email, social media, text messages, newsletters, traditional media?
- Will it be a one-time appeal, or will it require follow-up?
- What response systems need to be in place for it to be effective?
- How will you manage follow-up and thank you messages?
- How will you measure the campaign's effectiveness?

Select the Campaign Lead or Team

Now that you've figured out the basics, you will need to accept or delegate the role of campaign lead to coordinate everything required to successfully launch and manage the campaign.

Depending on the size of your organization's staff and board, you may need to recruit volunteers as well. If certain tasks require specialized skills, or if your solicitation process requires a high volume of hours and labor to effectively execute and follow up, tap into the right people to get the job done.

🕒 20 days before campaign kickoff

Choose the Focus or Theme

Your campaign's focus and call to action must be compelling and donor-centric.

Though your campaign's purpose is to raise money to sustain and support your work, communicating your organization's financial needs alone will not get the job done. It could even have the opposite effect, as people are less likely to contribute to an organization they perceive as stressed beyond its abilities because of an overwhelming cause, mission, or financial need.

In each channel you use to send your appeal (direct mail, email, social media), center your theme on an emotionally compelling story.

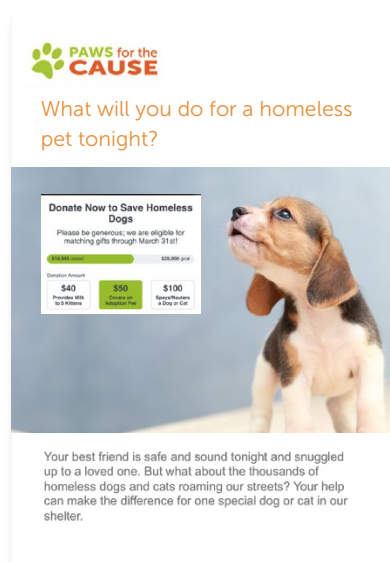
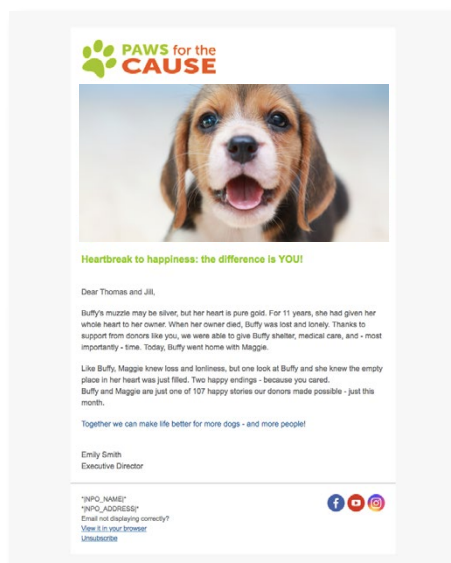
Focusing your appeal on an individual and their personal story will resonate with donors on an emotional level, which is more effective than focusing on heartbreaking statistics.

This campaign message gives you the opportunity to connect and engage with your donor base and prospective donors. It's tempting to share everything that is wonderful about your organization.

Don't.

Even if the content is so great that people read every single word of your four-page appeal, by the time they finish, the urgency of your call to action will have faded.

Use imagery to help donors see themselves as the agent of change and to know how to act to make that change a reality. Capture the essence of their impact on the lives of your beneficiaries. Choose an image that captures who your donor can help and what they can achieve through your mission and programs. Imagery can be powerful in driving home your message, especially if your appeal includes a clear photo of one person or animal looking straight at the camera (and the donor). This will create a powerful attachment between your donor and your subject. Incorporate similar imagery on your donation page, but this time, shift the focus to your giving options by using images of people or animals looking at the form. This will subtly help the donor figure out what giving level, amount, or frequency to select.



🕒 17 days before campaign kickoff

Segment Lists

Because this campaign is donor-centric, it's important to make careful choices on how to segment your donor lists, so you're putting the appropriate message in front of each donor group.

Data-driven management of lists and databases will give you the ability to identify and target your donors and prospects while personalizing your message or communication channel(s) to consistently engage them in the most effective way possible. A well-segmented database will also empower you to have accurate information on your campaign's performance.

Basic [segmentation](#) can be done by giving history, program, or divided into current donor, lapsed donor, and nondonor (prospect). To personalize your appeals, you will need the following:

- Name (first, last, title)
- Address (including city, state, zip code)
- Email address
- Last gift amount (if any)
- Specific campaigns/programs

Optimize your spring campaign by tailoring your message and delivery method as well as personalizing any follow-up and thank you letters to individual donor segments.

For the most effective campaign (and follow-up), use a [donor management system](#) designed for nonprofit fundraising. It will allow you to easily track donors and their gifts, group segments, and send tailored communications. You'll also quickly learn how your campaign is performing.

🕒 16 days before campaign kickoff

Develop Giving Levels

To raise more money, be sure to include desired or recommended donation amounts. Your loyal donors may be familiar with and supportive of your organization but they may not know what is expected or needed to sustain it. New prospects inspired to contribute will appreciate guidance on what constitutes a useful gift.

A suggested donation amount gives your donors one less thing to consider—and may encourage a higher level of giving or stretch gift. Failing to provide specific gift amounts is the most common mistake organizations make when conducting a campaign.

If you're using this opportunity to upgrade or renew recurring donors, don't use vague language like "renew now!" This approach fails for several reasons:

- 1) Donors may not recall their previous gift(s).
- 2) They may not have time to look up the amount they donated last year.
- 3) Their personal circumstances or financial situation may have changed.
- 4) They may be unaware of new needs or any capacity building your organization is planning or has underway.
- 5) They fail to consider changes in the economy, which may make a \$100 gift a smaller donation than it was last year.

Here's a simple way to identify giving levels: Review the giving levels from your donor base and look for set points—\$100, \$250, or \$500—where your current donors usually contribute. Multiply these amounts by the number of prospects your campaign intends to reach and engage. Finally, compare that amount to your fundraising goal to decide on giving levels for an effective campaign strategy.



🕒 15 days before campaign kickoff

Build Communication Channels

A successful campaign hinges on delivering a consistent, compelling message across multiple channels to support your overall fundraising goal. Remember, a campaign is a process, not a single appeal. Think of it as a well-orchestrated series of activities that all tie back to your central case for support.

Plan a spring campaign that includes a series of activities that deliver your inspiring message to as many targeted donors and prospects as possible while using the full spectrum of media and communication channels. Which channels you choose will depend in part on available resources—time, talent, and money. Reviewing and analyzing your donor segments will help you drill down on the channels each donor prefers.

Email and online fundraising are the most popular channels for nonprofit organizations.

Ensure that your online donation methods are both simple to use and fully secure to keep your transactions and donor information safe.

Establish analytics for your online fundraising efforts. Monitor the following statistics and calculations:

- Click-through rate from your email appeals.
- Percentage of donation-page visitors who give.
- Percentage of donors who give through another channel (such as mail).
- Overall response rates (through all channels).
- Total number of gifts.
- Total amount of gifts.
- Average gift amount.
- Response rate.

To maximize your online gifts, it's important to have a [donation page](#) that makes it easy for you to tell your story and for donors to give. A giving experience that evokes your campaign theme and offers suggested giving amounts will help you convert more donors and see higher average gifts.



Phone solicitation can be the primary method of engaging donors or a follow-up action plan after email or direct mail. The clear advantage is that a phone call is very personal and enables authentic engagement with your donor base and prospective donors.

Although they should never sound like it, phone solicitations should always be scripted. Provide callers with responses to possible objections and a list of organizational contacts who can directly address questions.

Even if your team has experience with phone solicitation, provide a training session outlining the fundraising objectives of your spring campaign.

Empower your team with simple but effective techniques to deliver the message enthusiastically, engage with donors and prospects, and consistently complete the call with a donation. If the phone solicitation is a follow-up to direct mail or online appeals, make sure the solicitors are familiar with the materials that were sent out and have copies at hand as they make calls.

Again, be certain that systems are in place to monitor the effectiveness of phone solicitations, measuring results against attempted calls, call times, and individual solicitors.

The most crucial aspect of the communication method(s) you incorporate into your spring campaign is that the messaging is consistent, even if the verbiage varies for your target audiences.

🕒 *10 days before campaign kickoff*

Create Appeals and Assets

The design of your appeal is the heart and soul of your spring campaign. Its impact and effectiveness will directly determine your fundraising results. Your appeal must:

- Feature donor-driven, inspiring content.
- Use the inform-engage-invite technique (see below).
- Share a relevant story that climaxes with an emotional hook.
- Focus on the impact a donor's gift will have.
- Specify a call to action with a sense of urgency.
- Use valuable real estate provided by a "P.S."
- Initiate or cultivate a relationship.
- Include images and materials that demonstrate value and quality.
- Have a coordinated thank you message ready to send.

Equally important is what not to do. When designing your appeal, don't:

- Use the opportunity to explain every facet of every program.
- Make the organization appear desperate or the cause overwhelming.
- Assume information about your organization is common knowledge.
- Portray the donations as the ultimate goal—or as a transaction.

Inform, Engage, and Invite Technique

One of the most successful presentation methods to use is the "inform, engage, invite" technique. Tell your compelling story, informing the prospective donor of the mission in a personalized, relatable way. Engage them by asking rhetorical questions and making them the hero of your story. Finally, invite them to be part of the solution by donating or otherwise responding to your call to action.

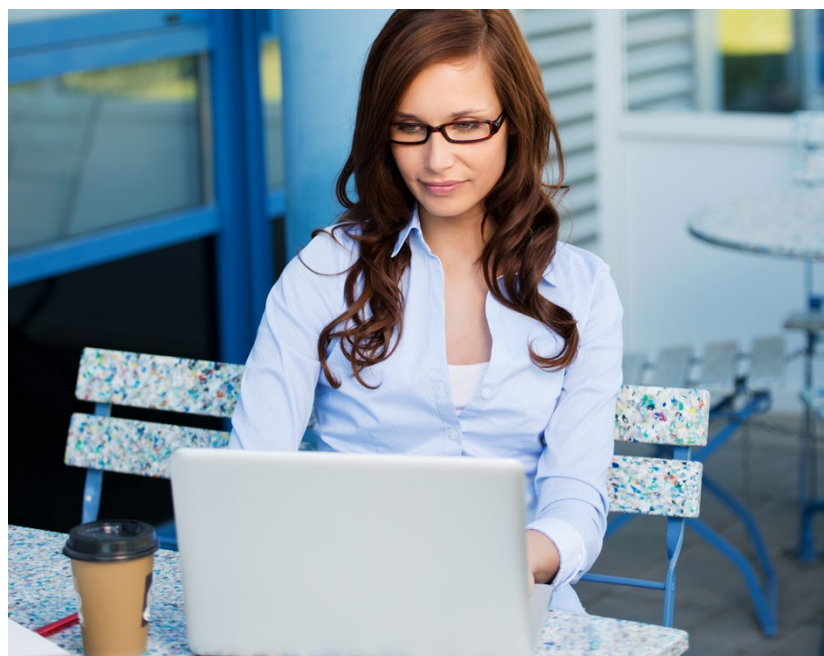
🕒 *5 days before campaign kickoff*

Branding and Socializing the Campaign

Every part of your campaign automatically becomes a part of its branding and marketing.

Your spring campaign provides wonderful opportunities to issue press releases, social media announcements, and blog updates. Prior to launch, plan out how you will make the most of these opportunities. Effective marketing can happen at key points throughout your campaign, including:

- Goal announcement
- Story selection
- Campaign kickoff or launch
- Benchmarks toward fundraising goal
- Homestretch or last-minute reminders
- Matching gift opportunities
- Spotlight program participants
- Donor recognition
- Final campaign results



🕒 *Every 72 hours after campaign kickoff*

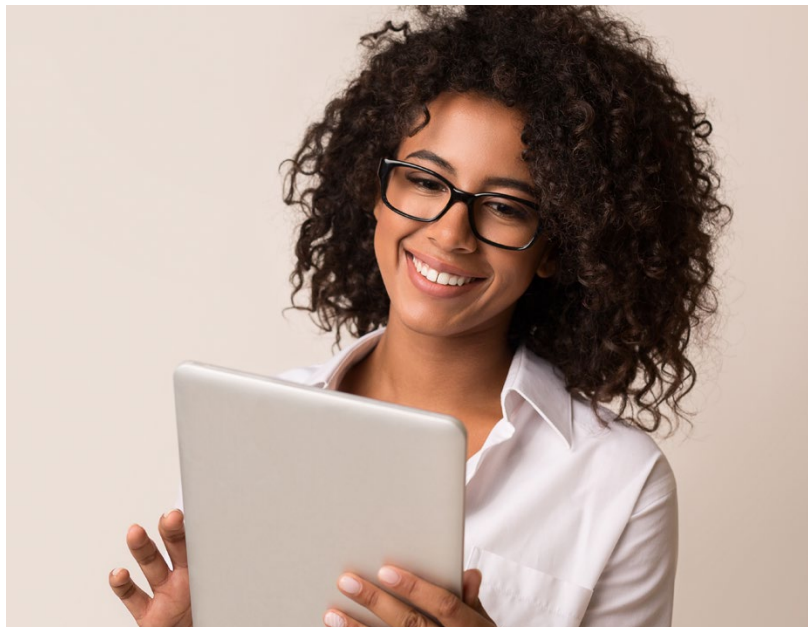
Follow-Up Appeals

As with all strategic fundraising, the post-launch activities and follow-up to your spring campaign should focus 80 percent of your energy and resources on the 20 percent of donors who will champion your cause and give larger amounts—those donors and potential donors who were identified while segmenting your donor lists and selecting target prospects.

The range of follow-up is unlimited. Guide your choice by the most popular contact methods categorized during your segmentation process.

Here are some effective follow-up options to accelerate your campaign:

- Postcard reminders after direct mail appeals are very effective for traditional, more mature (older) donors and potential donors.
- Phone banking can also be part of a prompt, personalized follow-up to your spring campaign launch. It generates excitement while providing positive, personalized engagement with donors and prospects and reinforces the urgency of your call to action.
- Social media—particularly Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter—can target specific demographics, typically younger donors and prospects.
- Focus your website's home page or landing page on your spring appeal. In addition to restating messaging and urgency, your website can provide updates, third-party endorsements, testimonials, charity ratings, and security systems; especially on the donation page, which will increase donor confidence with your online donation process.



🕒 *1 day after gift is received*

Thank and Recognize Donors

No matter what communication channels you use, always send donors a personalized thank you message as soon as possible. The message should simply and clearly express gratitude and recognize the donation's impact. Whenever possible, explain exactly how their gift will be used to address your nonprofit's cause. Do not include the recipient's donation history or any additional appeals as part of the thank you message.

A prompt, personalized thank you is an integral part of the relationship-building process. Recurring gifts or monthly sustainers need to receive steady but unique acknowledgment and thank you messages for their ongoing commitment to your organization and its mission.

🕒 *10 days after conclusion of campaign*

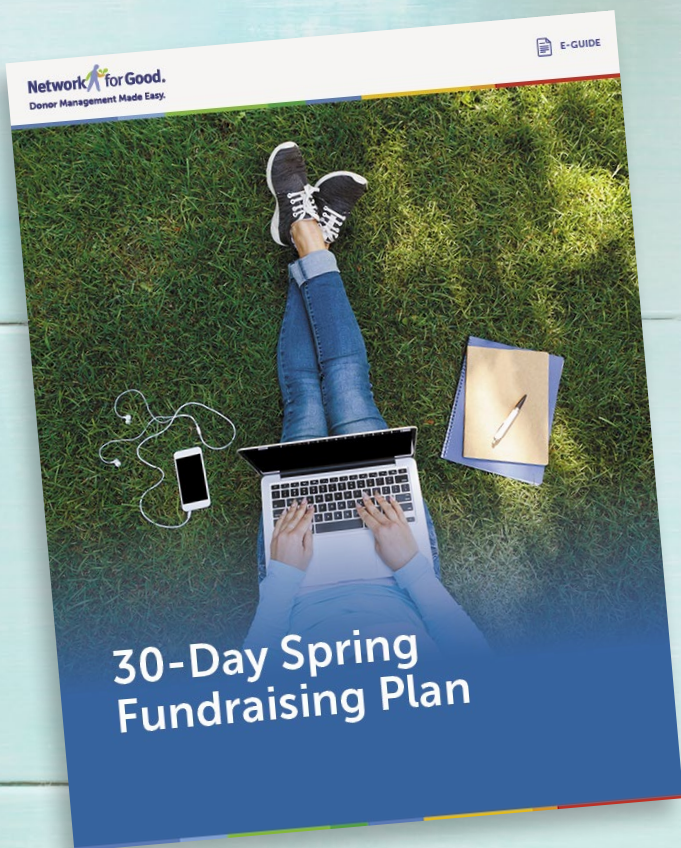
Measure Results and Refine Plan

Beginning with the launch of your spring campaign, track the results for each target segment and communication method so you can repeat the best parts of your campaign.

Upon completion of your campaign, share your success with donors and let them know what you've accomplished together. Celebrate your accomplishments with your staff and volunteers who helped launch the campaign. Recognize those who significantly advanced or spearheaded the campaign.



Once all donations have been processed and acknowledged, review your data to determine what worked and what needs improvement. What would you do differently and what efforts will you replicate in future campaigns? Revise your strategy moving forward until you find the perfect balance for your organization.

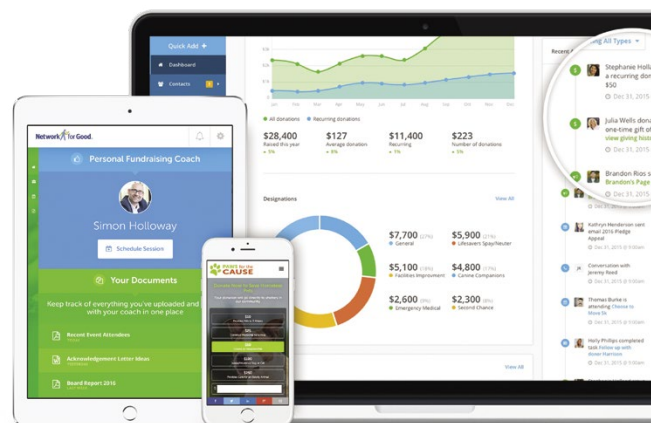


We'd love to hear from you!

Take our 1-minute survey to tell us what you think of this guide.

ABOUT NETWORK FOR GOOD

Since 2001 Network for Good has been instrumental at helping tens of thousands of nonprofits raise more funds by engaging supporters and donors in a more meaningful and impactful way. Refreshingly easy to use Donor Management Software, Fundraising Pages, and Personal Fundraising Coaches provide nonprofits with a complete fundraising solution, reducing their need for disparate systems, saving them time and enabling them to raise more funds to support their mission.





Donor Management Made Easy

Every piece of information about your donors and contacts adds a new layer to your relationship with that individual. Use your data to discover why they support your nonprofit, what programs interest them, what communications they respond to, and what events they attend. Organized, accessible information improves engagement, deepens relationships, and reveals a treasure trove of stories and testimonials.

Network for Good believes in the power of small nonprofits. We believe a donor management system should save you time and improve efficiency, in order to free you up to do the good you do in your community.

