



END OF YEAR APPEAL SOCIAL MEDIA PLAYBOOK

30 percent of all annual donations occur in December, and 12 percent of all annual donations occur during the final three days of the year, according to Charity Navigator.

Follow this checklist to ensure your social media supports your other marketing mediums during this crucial fundraising window.

1. SET YOUR GOALS AND OUTLINE YOUR STRATEGY

- Ask the important questions before you start writing posts:
 - Who are you trying to reach? New donors, former donors?
 - What social media channels do they use?
 - What is your fundraising goal?
 - Do you have budget for boosting or promoting your posts, and can some be spent on building awareness?
- Think ahead to coordinate your social media calendar with emails and other marketing strategies. Decide on what you hope to accomplish and curate content to match these goals.
- Determine frequency of emails and posts. If you plan to boost some of your posts, determine budget allocation for selected posts.
- Engage brand ambassadors – board, staff, longtime or enthusiastic donors or volunteers – who will help spread the word and spark donations by making early contributions.

2. USE BEST PRACTICES TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

- Begin by building awareness of the campaign before asking for donations.

- If you are trying to reach past donors, consider using Facebook targeting to ensure people who have expressed interest in charitable giving see your content. If you are trying to reach new donors, promote broadly, based on interests that are associated with your cause.
- Pair an engaging visual with your post to grab attention.
 - Engaging photos make use of good lighting, and often feature faces – making a greater connection with the audience. The best photo examples are representative of the work of your nonprofit and the clients it serves, meaning they include diversity that is reflective of the population you aid.
 - When designing graphics, make use of bold fonts and contrasting colors with enough negative space. Use the same overall appearance or style across visuals on the website, blogs, in emails, and in social posts. Campaigns that are branded earn 38% more in donations.
 - Make use of campaign video if feasible. 57% of online donors make a contribution after watching a video, making it the most effective form of media for end-of-year appeals.
- Focus on impact. Letting the potential donor see the possibility of what their dollars can do, or reminding a past donor where their dollars have changed lives, will make for an excellent emotional appeal.
- Include a clear call to action. Either direct to your website where there is a noticeable donate button, or include a donate button within the ad.
- Offer suggested giving amounts and if possible, tie them to a tangible impact.
- When writing copy and headlines, consider writing multiple of both and selecting the best, or using A/B testing to choose the most effective option.

3. IMPLEMENT ON ALL CHANNELS

- Customize your message for each channel. Consider the importance of visuals on Instagram and short, clear copy on Twitter and adjust your content accordingly.

- Stick to a consistent theme, both through language and design, as you build awareness of your campaign and then begin with direct asks. But balance making each post different enough from the last that the viewer won't glance over, thinking they have already seen the content.
 - Avoid mentioning other events or programs, stay focused on the end-of-year appeal. Use *one* powerful call to action per post.
- Direct some of your advertising budget toward earlier posts to build awareness of your campaign before later posts which involve direct asks. Closing posts (around the end of the year) should generate a sense of urgency and remind those who have already considered contributing.
- Suggest that those who have donated share their contribution with their own networks. This user-generated content can foster a strong sense of the need for further contributions, outside of your own communications efforts.

4. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

- Monitor your posts across channels at multiple times per day when traffic is highest. Ensure someone on your team is notified when engagement occurs so you can utilize the opportunity to generate a conversation and humanize your organization.
- Keep an eye on which posts see the highest reach and engagement, especially link clicks, and use that to inform your future posts during the campaign.
- If you've publicly shared a goal for the campaign, provide progress updates via social media. For example, something like "Thanks to everyone has donated so far. We've raised over \$10,000 – we're halfway there! Donate today to help us reach our goal!"

5. THANK YOUR DONORS

- It is crucial that donors are properly and warmly thanked in a timely manner. Ideally, the expression of gratitude should occur within 24 hours, but certainly within one week of the donation.
- The 'thank you' is half the appeal because it continues the conversation and makes donors receptive to your next campaign. It builds your relationship with the donor and earns their loyalty and trust through sincere appreciation and ongoing engagement.
- Some ideas and options for thanking donors:

- Embed a video in the confirmation screen
- Send an email with a tax receipt, including pictures or GIFs
- Post a thank you on social media and tag the donor (if they are comfortable sharing and do not prefer to remain anonymous)
- Personally call the donor, assuming they have provided their direct phone number
- Send a formal thank you note and tax receipt and included a handwritten thank you – via snail mail
- Another creative option
 - Artwork from a child you serve?
 - A photo of someone who benefited from the donation?
 - Think outside the box!

6. LEVEL UP END-OF-YEAR APPEAL SOCIAL MEDIA

- Inform your partners, brand ambassadors and champions when you are posting to ensure they have the opportunity to share or engage with your posts.
- You don't always have to be formal or follow the rules. Trying something a little outside the box often leads to improved organic reach and engagement.
- Place your donors in the spotlight. Show them what they can do with their contribution and make them part of the story. Think of how you can use your supporters' motivations for giving, passions, and sense of identity to create a fundraising appeal that is more relevant to them.
- Showcase the good you are doing by sharing stories of individuals who have been touched by your mission, highlight the transformative impact of giving, and compel your audience to take action.

Do you have questions on how to use social media for your end-of-year appeal? Contact Rose Tantraphol at rose@moonsailnorth.com or 517.775.2152.