

6 Steps to Being a Successful Fundraiser

1. DO THESE THINGS AFTER STARTING A FUNDRAISING PAGE

MAKE A DONATION TO YOUR OWN PAGE. Other people are more likely to donate to your page when they see that someone has already contributed. Donating some of your own money also demonstrates to potential supporters that you are serious about helping wildlife conservation.

PERSONALIZE YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE. Add your own text, pictures, or video. Remember, your potential donors will be interested in the cause, but they are primarily interested in you. Make sure you tell them why you are getting involved and what your connection to saving animals is (it doesn't have to be long).

INDIVIDUALLY EMAIL 5-10 CLOSEST PEOPLE. Ask them for donations first. Getting your "inner circle" to donate to your page will help you build up some momentum. It's also good to start with the people you are most comfortable with (see next section!).

2. USE THE ONION METHOD

Think about your fundraising strategy like an onion from the inside out. The best fundraisers start by asking their closest contacts first (the core) and progressively working outward to more distant contacts (the outer skin).

DAY 1, EMAIL #1 Send to 5-10 very close contacts (family and your closest friend or two).

DAY 2, EMAIL #2 Send to 5-10 close contacts (your entire circle of good friends).

DAY 3, EMAIL #3: Send to as many other contacts you feel comfortable sending a message to (co-workers, friends of friends, distant relatives, your entire address book, etc.).

DAY 4, SOCIAL MEDIA: Promote via Social Media to anyone who will listen.

Why Onions?

- Your closest contacts are the ones most likely to donate, and you're more likely to build up a good foundation of donations.
- Studies show the closer to your goal you are the more likely people are to donate.
- So when your outer circles see your page with some progress, they'll likely want to be part of the "movement" too!

3. THINK ABOUT YOUR EMAIL AUDIENCE

There is no perfect formula for writing an email asking family and friends for donations, but here are some best practices:

WRITING A GENERAL EMAIL:

- Start by explaining your connection to animals and why they are important to you. Describing how conservation has touched your life is probably the most important element of your message.
- In a sentence or two explain the good work Conservation Nation is doing to advance the cause. This helps potential supporters understand where their money would be going and what it would be used to accomplish.
- Be clear to potential supporters about what you are looking for; make a direct ask for financial support.
- Include a link to your fundraising page.
- Thank your contacts for their time and support.

WRITING TO YOUR CLOSEST CONTACTS

- You know your closest contacts better than anyone. Don't feel like you have to stick to a predefined formula.
- If a one line message is going to work, go ahead and do that. If a longer personal message will work best, do that.
- Just make sure you include a direct request for support and a link to your fundraising page at the end of your message.

ALWAYS REMEMBER: When you're writing to your contacts, just be yourself. If something feels forced or inauthentic, scrap it.

4. MAKE THE MOST OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Start fundraising through Facebook and Twitter after you've sent your initial batch of emails.

GET YOUR TAG ON. Start on Facebook by tagging those that have already donated and thanking them for their donations. When you tag someone your post gets shared in your activity feed and the other person's activity feed too. This also shows that people are already donating to your page (remember success breeds success!).

SET INTERNAL GOALS. \$200 by one week, \$400 by two weeks, etc. Use your social media to update followers on your progress towards each goal and ask for people to help you get over the next hurdle.

EMBEDDED SHARE. If you're using our fundraising page, share buttons are right on your page!

DON'T MAKE EVERY POST AN "ASK". Share inspiring news stories or other positive anecdotes about the cause too!

CONSIDER GIFTS. Offer your own gifts to friends and family who helped you reach your goal. Or provide a raffle or prizes for certain giving levels. It doesn't have to be anything extravagant, just a token of your appreciation.

5. BE SURE TO FOLLOW UP

By setting internal goals, you accomplish two things. First, you create more urgency when you ask friends and family for support. Second, you give yourself a built-in reason to follow up.

USE GOALS AS A FOLLOW UP TOOL

- Reach out to non-responders when you're approaching one of your internal goals. If you set a few internal goals, you can plan on sending a couple follow up emails. Remember people can easily miss or skip over your initial email!
- And of course, include progress updates in your follow up messages.

GIVE 'EM GOOD CONTENT

- Consider including any inspiring stories or personal anecdotes you have about the cause.
- Or share related current events or blog articles.

CONTINUE TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA.

SOCIAL MEDIA is a softer medium for communicating with your contacts and it's more acceptable to frequently post updates in those channels.

6. CONSIDER STARTING A TEAM FUNDRAISER

Fundraising teams range in formality. If you're running a race or doing a walk together, there will probably be a bit more involved than if you are just fundraising online as a group. Either way, here are some starting tips for creating a successful team:

RECRUIT. After you create your team fundraising page, you need to recruit your team members. You can start by emailing or calling the people you think might be interested in joining you. Follow that up by making a few requests through Facebook and Twitter.

START WITH A THANK YOU. As people join your team, send them a quick email to thank them for joining and helping the cause.

COME UP WITH A GOAL. When you've got most of your team members signed up create a reasonable team fundraising goal. You can do this on your own or after getting feedback from team members (either way, just use your best judgement about what is achievable).

KEEP COMMUNICATING. Send an email to the group thanking them again and communicating the team goal. Then send periodic updates about the team's progress (and encourage people to share ideas about what's working best).

BE YOUR TEAM'S #1 FAN. Be supportive and send along words of encouragement to team members as you work towards the goal.

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER

Fundraising can seem daunting at first, but we want you to know we always have your back. And remember, there's a reason you began this journey, so keep the mission for wildlife conservation alive!

Need additional help, or have questions?
CONTACT US: info@conservationnation.org