



# How to Turn Members into Donors

Join. Engage. Unite.



Nonprofits are always looking for ways to increase their members fundraising involvement. It's a tough task trying to navigate between a constituent's membership dues and benefits and asking for additional supplementary donations. There is plenty of debate on the current best practices for converting members into donors; however, there are generally three key tips that any fundraiser will agree can help further your organization's cause.



# Bridge the Gap Between Members and Donors

The first tip is to bridge the gap between your current members and prospective donors. In many cases, memberships and fundraising efforts are separated in their own verticals of the business, thus creating two different mindsets in how your organization approaches them. Because of this separation, there is a loss of opportunity. Let me explain... Your members are people that have already decided to have a connection with your organization and support your cause. For some constituents, their membership may solely be for the tangible benefits (i.g. discounts, education material, premium access, etc) but other members may be ready to increase their level of financial support. However, due to the separation of efforts within the organization, current members seeking more

philanthropic motivation are generally unaware of the additional ways they can help outside of their membership fee. The initial messaging members receive doesn't outline the long-term needs of your organization, so they assume by just joining, they are doing everything you've asked of them. Due to this lack of communication between membership and fundraising, it becomes a laborious task to identify members and cultivate new donations. By managing members and donors with a more holistic approach from the beginning, your organization can start identifying and marketing to constituents that are more receptive to your ask and are more likely to give additional donations outside of their membership.



# Make It Easy for Constituents to Donate and Find Information About the Cause

A second tip to help convert members into donors is to make it as easy as possible for your constituents to see the value that comes from an additional donation. I'm not saying to just put a big red "Donate Here" button on the main page of your website and call it a day. I'm talking about making information easily available for your constituents to see how their donation will further your cause and support your organization. This exercise is very similar to explaining the value of becoming a member. When your constituents were in the early stages of becoming a member, your organization clearly laid out all the tangible and intangible benefits of joining. The same mindset applies here. On top of explaining how easy and convenient it is to donate, you'll want to create reports and share data or statistics with your members to show them how a donation- even a small one- will benefit the organization.



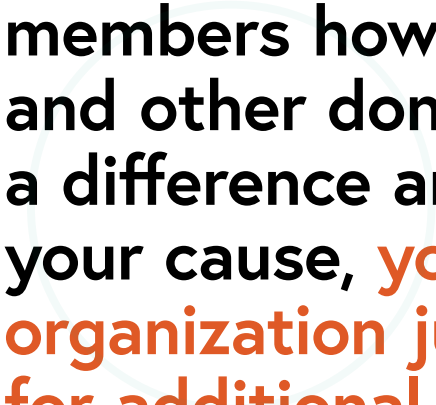
# Great Messaging in your Marketing Material is Essential

Great copy is essential! This tip generally ties to #2. Grateful, positive messaging helps solicit existing members in a non-pushy, inviting way without offending potential donors. You want to gently remind members how much your organization needs them to support your effort. All members should be aware of the different ways they can donate outside of a membership, whether it's by direct mail, email or visiting your website. That doesn't mean every communication with your members should be a request for money, but instead a gentle reminder that you still need help.

This type of messaging can help persuade members that while you sincerely appreciate their membership, there are still ways for them to become involved with your cause to further their own philanthropic motivation. There is debate within the fundraising community about asking for additional support in a "Thank You" email/letter to a donor or member after an initial gift. Some believe it can only lead to the alienation of a new constituent. Others see it as great way to target a potential prospect and "capitalize" on their happiness. I believe it's all about the way you frame your messaging. Sending a thank you email that is along the lines of "Thank you for \$X, would you like to give \$X more?" doesn't have the same appeal as one phrased "Thank you for \$X, this will help with our efforts for 'A', 'B' and 'C' which is vital to our organization. Other members have donated to 'D' which will help us with our cause even more. Would you care to be involved?"



This type of sincere, inviting text does not come off as overbearing and is very specific so the member knows exactly what is going on with their money without feeling like they are being upsold. Generic messaging that is always asking for donations without any justification or sincerity will only make your members upset when they feel as if their generous efforts are being overshadowed by requests to give or do even more.



**By being thankful and both reminding and showing your members how their membership and other donations are making a difference and impacting your cause, you help your organization justify the need for additional funds.**



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