



Mobilize Your Movement:

How to Unite People and Inspire Action for Your Cause



2020 has been a challenging year, hasn't it? With the rise in various social movements and a politically charged election year, many people are working to educate themselves on social justice issues, searching for organizations to donate and support, and aligning with causes that can make a difference in their community..

According to a recent New York Times article¹, Color of Change, one of the largest online racial justice groups in the U.S., went from having 1.7 million to 7 million members and received "hundreds of thousands of individual donations" in a matter of days. On Blackout Tuesday, a day where people went dark on social media to stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, ActBlue, the fundraising platform used by Black Lives Matter and other organizations, reported \$41 million in donations within a single day. And the Minnesota Freedom Fund, a small community bail project, raised \$35 million in the wake of George Floyd's death in Minneapolis, which overwhelmed the small organization.

Many nonprofits and racial justice groups have been flooded with requests from volunteers, donors and supporters. The flood of support is great news, but it can also be a challenge for these organizations to engage new donors quickly, provide them with resources and education, and reassure them that their chosen organization is ready to meet this moment and is the right group for them to invest their time and resources.

We've rounded up 5 tips to help you mobilize your movement and inspire action from your supporters:



1. Make Newcomers Feel Included

When a volunteer or donor first joins your organization, their first interactions with your team lays the foundation for their future relationship with you. How are you currently onboarding new constituents in the first few weeks, and how are you getting them involved immediately? This is particularly important in a digital world, because new volunteers can't meet people at your volunteer info session or happy hour like they could in a pre-COVID world.

Your onboarding process for new members, donors and volunteers should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. Each constituent is different and what motivates and engages some people may not work as well for others.



Consider enrolling newcomers in a nurture drip campaign, which is a sequence of emails that start with content aimed at the top of the marketing funnel and become narrower in scope, to help them get to know your organization, activities and programming available. Invite them to your online community and create dedicated discussions and virtual events to help newcomers meet one another. Take advantage of interactive tutorials that help them navigate around your website, member portal and digital spaces so that they get the most from their experience.

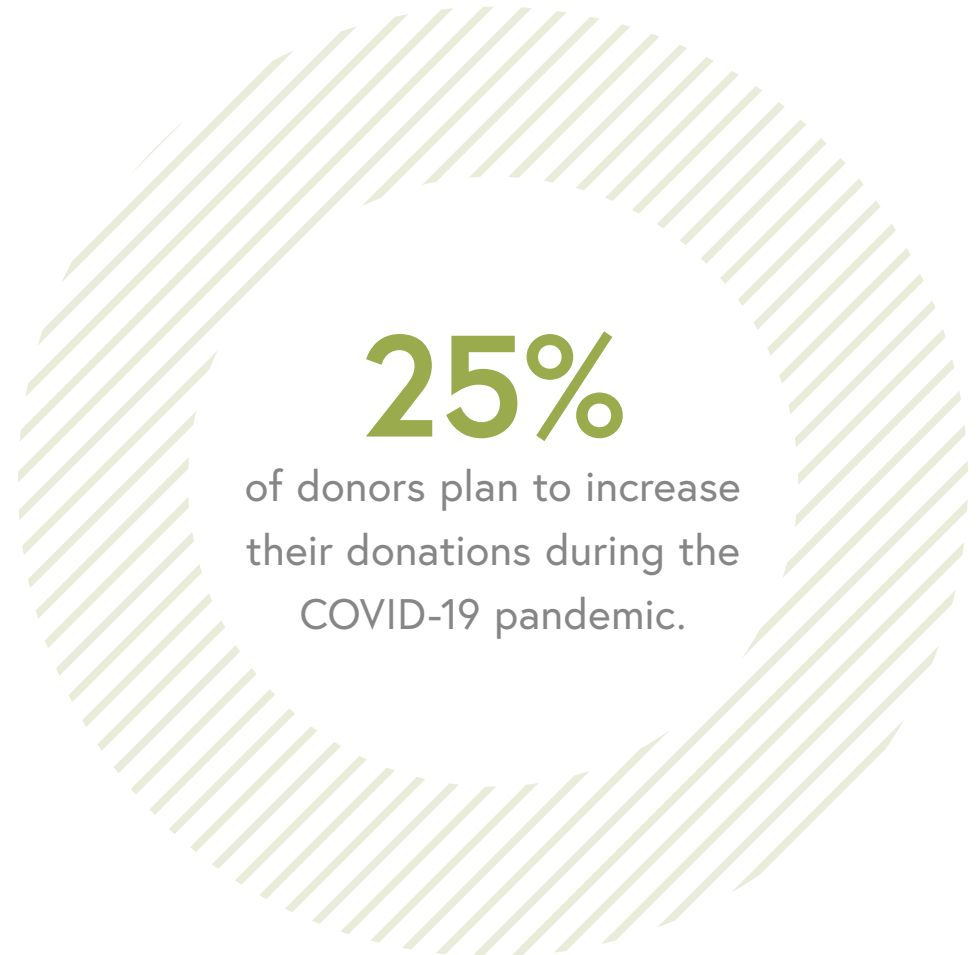
And, revisit your onboarding process every few months or a few times per year to understand what's working and what isn't. If you heavily relied on new member happy hours or in-person events to engage people, how can you recreate this experience in a world with social distancing? Tweaking your onboarding process does not require a big budget but rather creative thinking, clear messaging, a dedicated workforce or group of volunteers, and a plan of action to ensure swift execution.



2. Keep People Informed About Issues They Care About

In a recent survey, Fidelity Charitable found that 25 percent of donors plan to increase their donations during the COVID-19 pandemic, 54 percent plan to maintain their current giving levels, and only 9 percent planned to donate less². Whether you are connecting with a new or current donor, it's important to reassure them ensuring that their dollars and their time will be used effectively.

People are raising their hand to learn more about your organization because you've demonstrated expertise and a commitment on a topic that is near and dear to their hearts. Make that relationship with the donor or volunteer more valuable by curating unique and relevant experiences that are designed to keep them informed and advance your mission—whether you're focused on amping up fundraising efforts, increasing attendance virtual events or growing your volunteer base.



Personalization is key. Rather than notifying your supporters about every activity in your organization and potentially overwhelming them, take time to understand their interests upfront that will allow you to highlight opportunities that fit these needs.

Take advantage of a preferences center as part of your member management system or email marketing platform to deliver the content that will be most meaningful to them. You can also use newsfeeds and personalized content within your online community and virtual events platform to tailor content to their interests. With an intuitive online community like Personify Community, you can easily curate an experience unique to each member and greet them with a newsfeed of all the content they routinely interact with or present a bite-sized look at the content that's most active in your community. Allow community members to engage with, respond to and consume the content they care about all in one place, even all on one page.



3. Create Experiences to Engage Them Year-round

Many nonprofits traditionally build their outreach calendar around a few key events that take place throughout the year such as an annual conference, fundraising event, 5K and Giving Tuesday. The beauty of virtual events is that they do not need to be limited to the three days when all of your supporters fly in for your annual conference or the weekend that you hold your 5K or fundraising event.

Engage people year-round through virtual events, happy hours, meet-ups and more. Consider breaking your annual conference into mini events that take place each quarter and require smaller chunks of time from our supporters. Empower your volunteers to host their own meetups and form affinity groups tied to specific issues within your organization.



People are conditioned and accustomed to using digital tools to feel more connected and engaged with their peers. Virtual events and online communities create a forum for constituents to interact with a trusted source – their peers.

Your online community enables supporters to engage with people that they know and trust in your organization, creates a safe space for sensitive topics to be discussed and provides you with ownership of the content created within the platform. Trust is a critical factor in participation. If your volunteers trust that your portal or community is a safe space for them to share their ideas, goals and feedback, they'll be more likely to post, comment and share and continue to be involved with your organization.



4. Give Supporters a Clear Path and Next Steps

Have you ever you joined an organization or donated to one and then failed to receive clear, actionable information on how to get involved? If so, you likely didn't renew or become an active part of the organization.

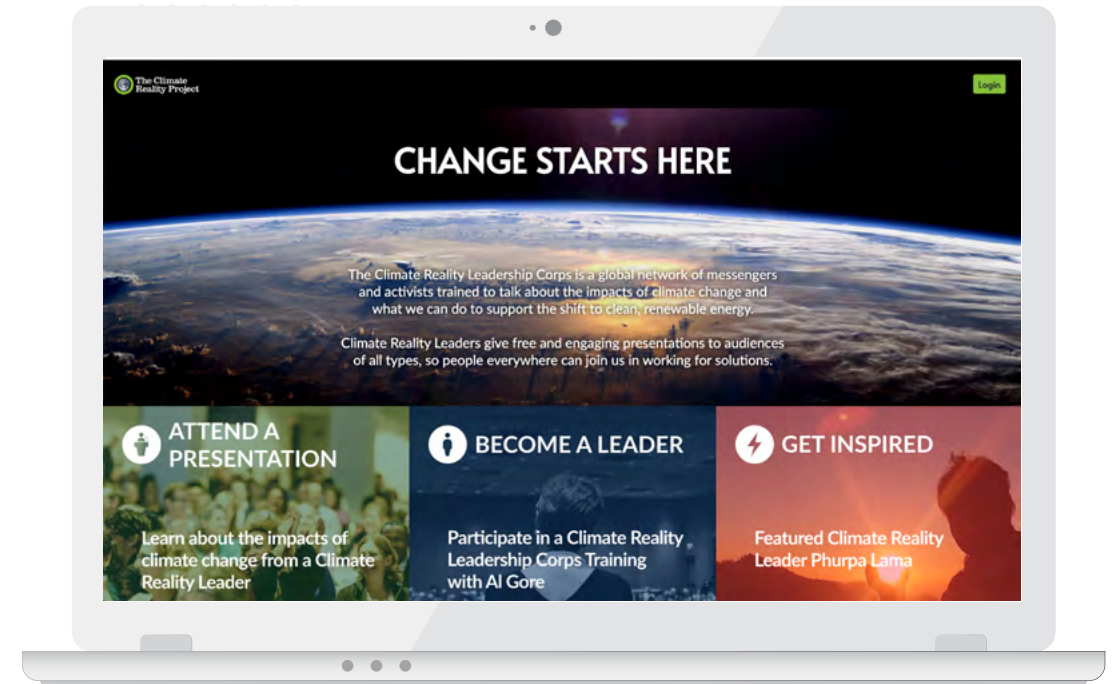
Your volunteers are valuable, and without them, many organizations would be unable to deliver programs, raise funds or achieve their goals. According to data from Independent Sector, the value of a volunteer hour is nearly \$25³. To keep folks active, it's crucial to make it easy for volunteers to understand the needs within your organization, and how to leverage their own skillsets and expertise to help reach your goals.



Take advantage of your email newsletter, discussion boards on your website and your online community to clearly articulate needs in your organization and match them with volunteers who have the time and expertise to support them.

Consider using badging to highlight your active supporters when they log into their volunteer portal and community, to give them recognition for their efforts and drive engagement. Badges can be used for attending a specific number of virtual events, joining committees, emailing and calling their representative, and more.

For example, the Climate Reality Project uses their online community Reality Hub, which is powered by Personify Community, to streamline the coordination of community presentations⁴. They utilize a location-based workflow to notify all leaders and volunteers within a specific radius when a presentation is requested in their community. This makes it easy for individuals that live in the same city or region to act and to share their expertise. The Reality Hub community also leverages badging to signify when volunteers have completed specific activities such as mentoring, serving as a chapter leadership member or winning an award from the organization.



View the Climate Reality Project Case Study [here](#).



5. Deliver More Value to Help Offset Your In-Person Activities

Many organizations have struggled during the pandemic, whether it's the challenges of a remote workforce, concerns about decreased revenue, shifting to digital programs, or other obstacles. One area where many nonprofits are struggling is the loss of in-person events that typically make up a significant amount of their revenue.

A report by the marketing agency Merkle Group backs this up; they found that more than 70 percent of nonprofits reported a decline in marketing spending in 2020 as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic with most of this coming from a lack of in-person events.

While we don't know how long it will be until we can gather face-to-face again, take this time to focus on creating messaging and programming that is personalized, localized and relevant to your supporters' current needs.

Also, look at opportunities to be more efficient with your current marketing spend and ways to diversify your revenue.

Consider these questions:

- How are your programs and activities helping your volunteers and donors navigate the overwhelming amount of information and resources that are relevant to their interests?
- How are you connecting people with others in your organization who share their interests?
- Are you giving supporters an online space to collaborate, share their progress and take action to further your cause?
- Have you surveyed or called your members to understand which programs they value most so you can focus your limited resources and investments?



Case Study: Four Diamonds

Four Diamonds, a nonprofit dedicated to fighting pediatric cancer at Penn State Children's Hospital, uses their online community to drive fundraising efforts among student volunteers for their mini-THONs, which are multi-hour events that involve games, dancing, music, and more. The Four Diamonds team saw a 5.5X increase in donations raised from participants who were part of the online community compared to those who were not⁶.

In 2020, they added a virtual fundraising hub within the community to offer resources and support for their socially distant volunteers. Students are able to share fundraising ideas and engage in activities with their peers, which is valuable now that many of these students are not able to attend school in-person or see their friends during the pandemic.

View the Full Four Diamonds Case Study [here](#).



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How We Can Help

If you're looking to take digital engagement to the next level, reach prospective supporters in a world that is flooded with information and calls to action, or if you want to keep up with a growing membership that is eager to learn, donate or engage—we want to support you along your journey.

We know this unprecedented time has created new and unique challenges in engaging with members, volunteers and donors and continuing to advance the mission of your organization. We're committed to helping you adapt to the change and emerge from COVID-19, or any crisis, more connected and resilient than ever.



About Personify

A trusted solution that allows for infinite possibilities, Personify is the technology foundation that provides insights to maximize engagement and deliver value across each and every interaction with members, donors, volunteers, attendees, exhibitors and more. For over 20 years, Personify has been a trusted partner to associations, nonprofits, show organizers, YMCAs and JCCs—helping them maximize engagement, improve insights, optimize operations, increase revenue and drive productivity.

For more information, visit www.personifycorp.com.



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