

Marion Conway Consulting November 2008 Newsletter

Use Online Giving Tools to Give Your Holiday Giving Campaign a Boost

This newsletter is an “extra edition” because I know that many of you are thinking about what you might do to invigorate your holiday giving campaigns this year. Using your online tools is one of the things you can do. As is frequently the case, this article is adapted from my blog where I sometimes write about nonprofits and technology.

Online giving remains a minor factor for smaller nonprofits, but it is growing rapidly and it is worth paying attention to this year. A Convio survey conducted in September had some noteworthy findings. About half the people surveyed said they planned to **donate online** this holiday season. There was some variance, but this is true across age groups 21 – 64. Forty-one percent of those who plan to donate online said they intended to support groups such as food banks and homeless shelters. This is great news for these charities as their industry is one of the few that is booming.

This isn't a comprehensive list, but here are some ideas for using your online tools to give your campaign a boost.

Update Guidestar – Guidestar is gaining in popularity. It will be featured in newspaper and TV segments as a resource to learn about charities. It will be linked to as an authoritative resource from more places than you know – everywhere from American Express to the Fidelity Gift Fund websites. For free – you can update your information to provide much more about your organization than what is on your 990. Do that today!

Update your website – If you don't already have Donate Now capability, do that as soon as possible. There is an excellent article at Idealware.org to assist you in making the right choice for your organization. Do you have any special holiday programs? Pictures from last year's event? A wish list? It's a good time to make sure your website is fresh and current – everything from event postings to the contact list. Make sure that you aren't featuring three year old events in your current events. Collect email addresses on your website by having people sign up for your newsletter.

Use email to complement your appeal letter- There is strong research data which shows that annual appeals delivered in snail mail have a better response rate when coupled with an email. Your email can be low key and be a brief holiday newsletter. Include a link to your website and a donate now link. Something I know about my own newsletter - People forward an email but never give your written material to anyone.

Network for Good gift card - Check out the Network for Good gift card and recommend that people give them as gifts for the holidays. They even have a custom program for businesses to be able to customize gift cards with their business name. You can provide a note about your organization to include with the card.

American Express – AE has year round ability to give online with your credit card but it is buried at their website. During the holiday season, they feature this capability and send emails about it to their card members. Using the Guidestar database, you can contribute to any charity using your credit card. Its easy and efficient. There also is a gift card available. An American Express Gift Card for charity may appeal to a certain clientele. Consider suggesting it in your appeal letter or email or on your website.

Use technology to reach younger donors - Technology is so ingrained that you have to use it to get to this age group. Now may be the time to get a start with using Social Media. Activate your younger donors and ask them to put a charity badge (widget) on their Facebook and MySpace pages for your organization. I've just posted mine on my blog and a link to the badge is at the end of this newsletter. It took just a few minutes to put together at Network for Good. CAC provides vital services to children and families in the inner city in Newark and as with many nonprofits this year the demand for services is strong and funding is in jeopardy. You can help by clicking on my charity badge and making your donation now.....See that is how simple it is. This is also a great idea to request of **your younger employees** who have MySpace and Facebook pages. Create your own charity badge at Network for good.org under "My Profile."

Even the Salvation Army has a new program aimed at younger donors. You will be able to text message to a number on the red kettles and a \$5 donation will be put on your phone bill. I'm impressed – the Salvation Army is embracing text messaging. What can be next? I guess I'll be writing about that next year.

Use a laptop at parties and events - Are you planning any holiday events? An Open House maybe? Set up a laptop and give people the opportunity to donate online from your website. You may just catch a few new donors or those in the celebrating mood who give more.

I wish all of you a Happy Thanksgiving and Joyous Holiday Season.

Marion

Visit my Charity Badge here:

<http://www.networkforgood.org/pca/Badge.aspx?BadgId=112869>