

Ultimate Guide To Year-End Giving PRESENTED BY LÚGH STUDIO

In our latest ultimate guide, we will be covering everything you need to know about the giving season. This is an essential time of the year for nonprofits everywhere and it pays to be prepared.

We will keep this guide as actionable as possible for quick results. Feel free to refer back to it during the last three months of the year — and be sure to download your PDF version of the guide for easy access.

With that said, let's get started.

- What is Year-End Giving?
- Why Year-End Giving is so Important
- What a Good Campaign for Year-End Giving Looks Like
- How to Get the Best Results During This Time
- Tools You Can Use
- Conclusion

WHAT IS YEAR-END GIVING?



"Year-end giving" can be defined as all the donations that happen to nonprofits towards the end of the year. While the time frame can vary, most year-end giving happens between October and December.

This also coincides with the last quarter of the year, the holiday season. This is important, as the fact that it's the holiday season will impact a lot of what you do with your campaigns.

Year-end giving is often defined as the donations that individuals make to their favorite charities. However (as we will see), it's just as applicable to the donations that organizations make. In fact, because of funds earmarked for donation, year-end giving by larger organizations can even be more important to your nonprofits goals.

WHY YEAR-END GIVING IS SO IMPORTANT

Before getting into this ultimate guide, it's important to understand why year-end giving is so important in the first place. Here are a few reasons you might consider.

1. The majority of donations to nonprofits come during the giving season.

The holiday season is typically when people are feeling the most generous. This means that people are much more willing to contribute to a cause they believe in than at any other time of the year. In fact, half of all non-profits receive the majority of their donations during the last quarter.

That's on the individual level. The same applies to businesses and organizations that often have a budget set aside for donating. Because this budget is almost never fully spent by the end of the year, year-end giving is the time when bigger organizations are planning on big donations.

Regardless of the reason, the holiday season is often when your organization will get the majority of its donations. It's up to you to take advantage of it.

2. People will better remember your organization at the start of the next year.

Let's face it: what you do at the end of the year has a big impact on people's perception of your brand at the beginning of the next year. The last few months of each calendar year are often some of the most important for both nonprofits and non profits. This means they are extra active in their promotions and campaigns.

People are used to this and have come to expect it. While this means their attention is limited during the last few weeks of the year, it also means that you have more incentive as an organization to run campaigns during this time. After all, lack of action on your part might be seen more as a mysterious absence.

Of course, it's important to walk a fine line here. Just as too little publicity is a bad idea, you also don't want to push your message too aggressively. Regardless, year-end giving sets the tone for the beginning of the next year. It's best to take advantage of it!

WHAT A GOOD CAMPAIGN FOR YEAR-END GIVING LOOKS LIKE

Before we dive into our main tips for optimizing your year-end campaigns, let's look at three basic elements you need to keep in mind.

Storytelling.

You want to link your campaigns to a story. We will get more specific about the role of emotion in your campaigns later on, but for now just remember the power of story.

The reason people like storytelling is that it makes it easier for them to relate to the world. Same goes for your nonprofit. If you connect your campaigns to stories, people are more likely to connect to your cause and donate as a result.

Specific.

What exactly are you asking your audience for? Do you have a specific amount in mind that you would like to receive on average? If so, are you communicating this clearly enough?

You will often get better results asking people to donate a specific sum than you will keeping your request general. It pays to be as specific as possible when it comes to year-end giving.

Impact.

This is not about you, and it's not even about your potential donors. Rather, it's about the beneficiaries of the funds that you raise. It's important to keep this in mind while setting up your end or year campaigns.

Focusing on the impact of your campaign is how you get people excited to contribute.

HOW TO GET THE BEST RESULTS DURING THIS TIME

1. Start campaigning earlier than you think you need to

It sounds cliche but it's true: time passes faster than you expect. When it comes to year-end giving, it pays to plan far ahead of time. While this is best practice in just about all of your business activities, your campaigns during the holiday season will likely involve many people on your team. That's why it's important to make a push as early as you can.



Struggling to pinpoint exactly what it is you need to plan? Here are just some of the elements and activities you might consider:



- Email automations. We have covered email marketing a number of times on our blog for a reason: it works. And when you use the power of automation, the channel is even more effective.
- Content surrounding your campaigns. People are more likely to donate if you create compelling content surrounding your fundraisers. Check out our ultimate guide to content marketing for more specific advice.
- Testimonials and case studies where relevant. Just like any other industry, social proof is important. These testimonials can be applied to both the people that directly benefit from your funds to people that have donated in the past.
- **Collaborations.** Are there other organizations in your industry that might be interested in working together with you during your campaigns? Would you benefit from it as well? Now's the time to reach out to them,
- Social media assets. Pictures and videos are valued at a premium during the holiday season. Better to start working on them now!

2. Make your campaigns holiday specific

People during the end of the year are in the holiday cheer. For profit companies know this and use it to their advantage. One of the ways they do this is by relying on "theme" for many of their campaigns. This doesn't have to be complicated and might be as simple as matching the colors of your campaigns to whichever holiday is closest.

Check out this guide for actionable advice on matching your campaigns to the relevant holiday.

3. Appeal to the emotions of your audience

The people you are reaching out to about donations are just that: people. This means they are subject to common emotions that you need to appeal to. While there are several you might consider, here are a few of the most important:

- Desire to make a difference. This is especially true if the amount you are asking for is comparatively small
- Fear of not belonging. Are people's friends donating during year-end giving as well? Might be the perfect time to mention it (and make use of powerful user generated content).

4. Prioritize people that have already donated in the past

Your best prospects for your campaigns are the people that have already donated in the past. These are people that have already proven that they stand behind your cause and have already shown themselves willing to pull out their wallet. Might as well ask them again!

There are a few ways to do this most effectively. One is referencing how successful your campaign was that they donated to in the past. By doing this you can position yourself as running with a campaign that has already been proven to work.

You can also take the opposite approach. Are you running a very different kind of campaign? Is this fundraiser collecting money for a different cause? In this case, differentiation is your friend.

Regardless, giving thanks is a huge component of year-end giving. Its only through the donations of people like them that you are able to affect the world for the better. Make sure they know it. This leads to our next point...

5. Be personal with your thanks

One of the golden rules of collecting donations is to make sure that people are acknowledged for their good acts. It's not enough to simply gather donations without a thank you. Do this and you have taken a short term benefit at the expense of a potential long term relationship with the donor.

Getting donations for your fundraiser is only the beginning of the process. You also need to be good at giving thanks. While sending an email or calling them is a step in the right direction, there are more creative ways to approach the process.

For example, if you want to really take it to the next level, you might consider personal notes gifts to the people. Not only does this make your donor feel truly appreciated, but guarantees they think of you the next time it comes to donate.

6. Increase the benefits to people the more they donate.





We covered at the beginning that people are generally more generous at the end of the year than any other time. That said, people are still more likely to act charitably if they get something in return.

This is simply human nature. People like to be rewarded for the good things that they do. Even if it's something as small as a 5 dollar gift card to Starbucks, small little gifts or "benefits." As we pointed out in our ultimate guide to nonprofit marketing, many donations are also considered tax deferred. If yours is, be sure to mention it to your audience.

7. Remind organizations of their "earmarked budgets"

We've already mentioned it but it's too important to not repeat: Many organizations have money set aside every year for donating to different causes. This means there is often a large sum of money up for grabs.

This money will often go either to organizations that a business has already donated to, or the organization that is simply at their "top of mind." You do this by being active in your promotion. After all, nobody can donate to your cause if they don't actually know that you exist. Be sure to get the word out and some of those "earmarked funds" just might be going to your fundraiser!

TOOLS YOU CAN USE

While our ultimate guide has a lot of information in it, it can be difficult to act on without the right tools. That's why we are ending our guide with a section on tools that can help you take more action.

Hunter.io

It can be difficult getting into contact with people in high level positions at various organizations. This tool is the solution. By making it easy to find just about anybody's email address, you can get into contact with the people that matter. This direct line makes it more likely your year-end campaigns succeed.

Buffer

As we have discussed, content plays a big part in running successful year-end campaigns. Still, organizing all your new pieces of content across different platforms can be a headache.

Buffer makes this a problem of the past. Schedule your content campaigns ahead of time

MailChimp

Email is often one of the main ways you will stay in contact with your donors. It's also a great way to quickly send information to new prospects about your new fundraisers. While there are a lot of ESP's that you can use, we are happy MailChimp customers. Check it out for a tool that can take care of all your email needs.

Pro tip: share your results with each person that you thank. This makes their contribution much more tangible and increases the likelihood that they donate next year!

Fundraise Up

Looking for something that can not only double your total donations, but is easy to use? Look no further than Fundraise Up! With this tool, AI conversion optimization and turnkey revenues make it simple to increase the average amount given. Perfect for your year-end campaigns.

CONCLUSION

It's important to approach year-end giving with not only a plan, but a willingness to act as well. It's only through action that you can put together campaigns that achieve their goals and fully deliver to your beneficiaries.

We hope you enjoy our guide. Refer to it as much as needed over the last few months of the year

Let us know if you ever need any help!