

# Jumpstarting Your Fundraising Efforts

The complete guide to understanding how to secure fundraising in the nonprofit arena.



Simplify Your Nonprofit

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# INTRODUCTION


After twenty years of fundraising for a number of nonprofits both in a paid capacity and as a volunteer, I am still fascinated by the reaction from people when they hear the word fundraiser. Some people run and hide like they just got called to the dentist chair where others will look at you suspiciously, intrigued but unsure like having food for the first time in a foreign place. If there is one thing that I have learned in working with nonprofits and faith based organizations it's that fundraising is not really about asking for money, rather it's about building relationships and matching people's passions with projects and charities that moves them to a place of concern and commitment. No tricks or fancy sales pitches but it all comes down to finding the right people, asking for the right amount at the right time.

Inside these pages you will find some of the core foundational practices of having a solid fundraising program. We have designed this book to help you with your fundraising efforts no matter your level of experience in the fundraising space. Regardless if you are a rookie leading an organization for the first time or you're a veteran in the space, you will find information and tips on how to approach fundraising, asking for support and building better relationships with friends, donors and prospects of your organization.

Our team at Aplos is committed to helping nonprofits and churches no matter your size or budget and we are excited to share some important tips and reminders for you to grow your support base and your mission.

Happy Fundraising,

Dan Kimball  
Aplos Software



*"It's not just about the money,  
but about the relationship  
and investment."*

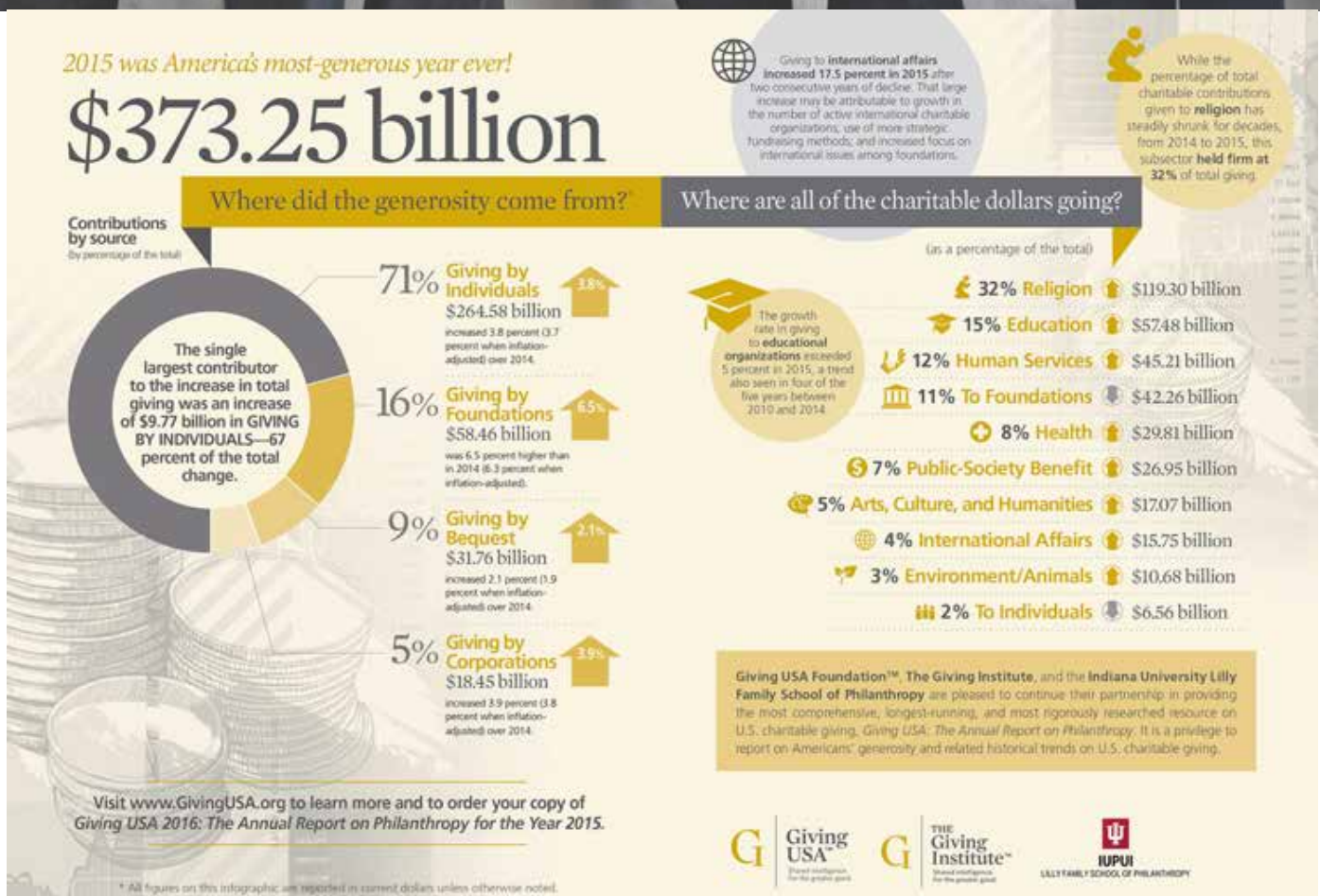
# FUNDRAISING 101

## Fundraising isn't just about asking for money.

Any expert who's worked in the field for a while can attest to that. However, even though the focal point centers around building relationships, the bottom line still remains the same. No matter how many people you meet or relationships you nurture, an organization still needs money to stay afloat. This e-book will teach you about the donor life-cycle and take you from the birth of a relationship all the way to the very end, in the hopes of showing you that finding a donor is more about the money in their pocket.

## So, time to start at square one: Identification.

Fundraisers can often be hesitant about approaching potential donors because they believe the community isn't interested in giving. Take a look at the chart below, and you'll realize this can't be further from the truth.





In the year 2015, the U.S. population was 321 million, with \$373 billion donated to charity.

That means the average American gave over \$1000 to charity. This number may sound hard to believe, and you may be thinking the reason it is so high per U.S. citizen is because foundations, large organizations, and corporations are offsetting the average. However, the money coming from those entities comprises the minority.

## About 71% of those donations came from individuals.

So, where did all those charitable donations go? Unsurprisingly, 32% of all the money went towards religious organizations. The next largest subset of contributions went to education, followed by human services, foundations, and human health. At the bottom of the list are individuals. Why did so much of it go towards religious organizations, education, and human services? The answer may seem obvious, but it will be mentioned anyway because it's important for a later point. The fact is people contribute donations to what they believe in and what they consider to be a good cause.

This is the first hurdle to overcome when it comes to fundraising. There are plenty of people out there willing to give money, but the caveat is that first they need to find an organization they can believe in.

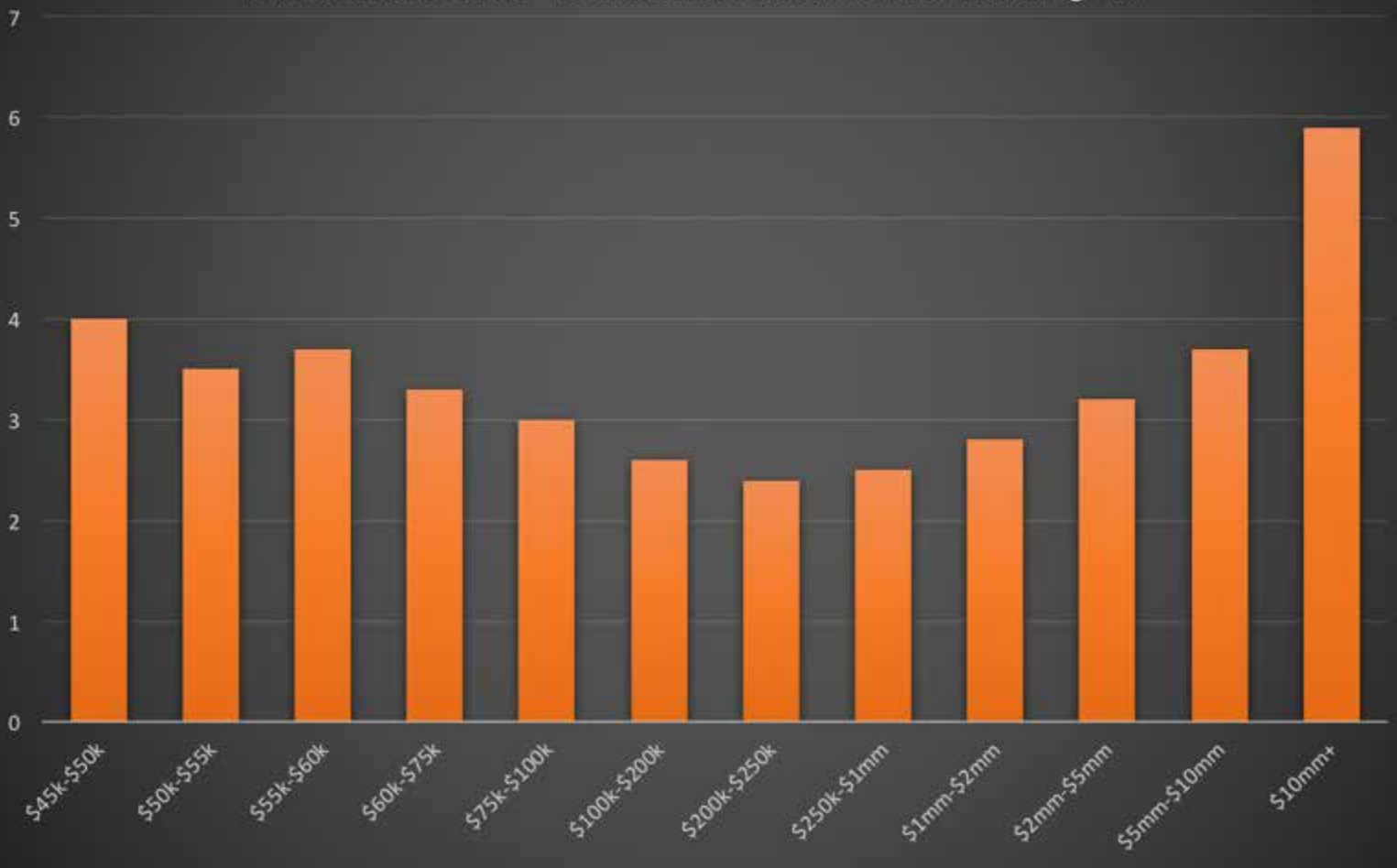
This brings us to the second hurdle—when you approach them and give it your all, you'll need a plan of attack.

## But wait, WHO?

It's easy to get a bit of green fever at a fundraiser when a wealthy person expresses interest in giving. And that's great, but when it comes to approaching the right people, realize you shouldn't always be going for those with the deepest pockets. The United States is a giving country by nature, and while the top 10% of the wealthy account for giving a quarter of the money, low-income families are responsible for giving up the second-largest percentage of income at 4.0%, behind the mega-rich.

## Total Contributions as a % of AGI

Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics: 2013 Facts & Figures



The far right of the graph above looks tempting, but realistically, someone like Warren Buffet isn't going to be showing up to your fundraiser. You could probably discount at least a few of those brackets. And for those who are wealthy attending the event, they'll be vastly outnumbered by the low to mid-income attendees.

This gives you an idea of who is giving money, but where is it going? For many, especially the far-left bracket that is giving the largest percentage, it isn't because they have a lot of disposable income to spare. Those people are writing checks to organizations they believe in. This is why it's so important to find the right crowd—the kind who will be passionate about your cause, will remember you, and will be more likely to stick around even after that first donation.

When you approach someone, you need to have a clear vision for what you want to say to him or her. You should articulate in the most obvious way that your cause is going to make a difference and an impact in the world, and that that person should stand behind you and your shared vision. Get them excited. Get them onboard to help you make a difference with your mission!

# ELEVATOR PITCH

Fundraising is as much an art as it is a science. It's an organic experience, which is why most people believe there isn't much to it other than "asking for money." Sure, those same people may think there's some planning and infrastructure involved with setting up events and creating the situation where fundraiser can speak with donor, but strategy is essential. The science, or the numbers, will be expanded on in a later chapter.

Chances are you've heard of an elevator pitch before. The name came from the scenario where you press the button to call an elevator, and as soon as the doors open and you step in, you find yourself face-to-face with a prospect. You only have until that elevator door opens again to sell them what you have.

As someone who works for a nonprofit, it's obvious you're doing it because you're passionate about the cause. It means you can talk endlessly about your mission, your organization, and how you want to change the world. Your energy is great, but that beam needs to be focused into a thirty-second laser.

Follow these steps when crafting an elevator pitch.

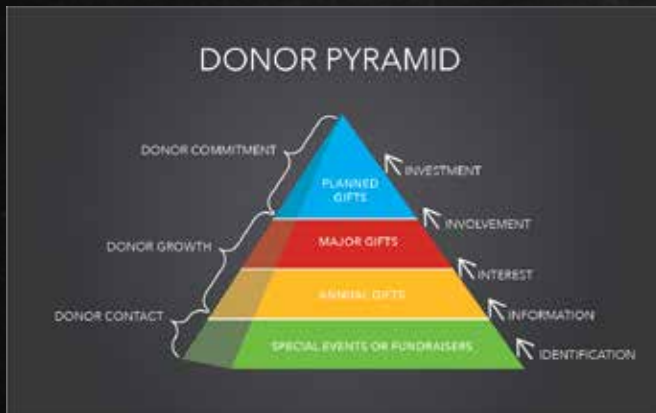
1. What's the goal of your organization?
2. What are you doing to achieve that goal?
3. What's your unique selling proposition, aka what makes your organization different?
4. Finish by engaging them with an open-ended question.

Following these steps will make your pitch short, sweet, and to the point. You'll want to practice so that it sounds natural in a conversation, and be prepared to change it up depending on the situation.

But as long as you know the ins and outs of your organization, you'll do just fine. Your enthusiasm about your cause and the difference it's making will shine through, and your prospect won't help but feel excited.

# THE PYRAMID VS THE FUNNEL

There is a traditional school of thought involving fundraising—an approach that has been around for a long time, and has recently been improved upon. This is what's known as the Fundraising Pyramid.



It moves from most frequent donations to least frequent, but that frequency is inversely proportional to the amount given. At special events and fundraisers throughout the year, you can have any number of people give donations. Out of that group, you may come across some who choose to keep on giving every year, either through an annual event or of their own accord. And then there are a few of them who decide, perhaps when they come across a bit of wealth, to give a large sum of money. Finally, there is that occasional person who so believed in the cause behind a nonprofit or foundation, they decided to give their life's monetary worth to that organization when they die.

## A More Contemporary Approach: The Funnel

The traditional pyramid was dictated by the purely physical nature of fundraising, before communications via technology revolutionized our culture—back when fundraising primarily involved going out and meeting people at events. While the pyramid is still useful in recognizing the small time, frequent donations contrasted against those rare big timers, the channels through which fundraisers approach donors has multiplied a hundred-fold over the past couple decades.

These days there is a more updated approach to viewing the pyramid, by simply flipping it upside down.



In this approach, it's less about comparing size and frequency of donations, and more about the relational aspect of fundraising—an approach that Aplos believes is the golden ticket to donation management.



One way you can rile up a fundraiser is by approaching them and saying, "You're basically in sales, right?"

While many people associate fundraising with essentially begging for money or making a sale, this couldn't be further from the truth. Ever heard of the saying, "It's about the journey, not the destination"? Sales are about the bottom line, but fundraising is more about the journey than the fruit that journey will bear. It's about developing relationships with those around you. Do that and the money will come in its own time.

This is why the fundraising pyramid was flipped into a funnel. **In Step 1, it's all about capturing.** Ensnare that person's interest. This can be anywhere from using peripheral material like e-books, webinars, email campaigns, and whatnot, to starting a conversation with someone who approached your booth at an event.

**Nurturing (Step 2)** is about taking that contact information or interest they've given you and building a relationship out of it. It's sort of like watering a plant. Many fundraisers end up drowning their prospects with overzealous attempts to get money when they should be nurturing the relationship and letting it grow at its own pace. If your goal is to admire its beauty instead of harvesting all its leaves, you won't risk killing it.

**Step 3 is to convert.** I'm not going to pretend that this relational approach to fundraising isn't about getting the donation too. This e-book is about helping you get the dollars and cents that will help fuel your nonprofit. However, Step 3 should not be the focus of the process. Steps 1 and 2 are just as important because even if you aren't able to convert, you've still developed a relationship with that person, and they're more likely to say good things about you and your organization to those they know, generating interest.

**Step 4 is where many fundraisers fail.** They think that as soon as they get the cheddar, then that's that. They don't consider thanking the person for giving up their hard-earned cash to the organization. Or maybe the fundraiser does send a thank you letter, but in that letter, they include a return envelope hoping the donor will send even more.

This approach is incredibly transparent and undermines the relationship you've created. By only engaging them when you want something, all you're saying is that you only care about what's in their wallet. You need to reach out without an ulterior motive in mind. You need to send them genuine thank you notes and letters. You also need to do this for all your donors—don't leave the little guys at the way side. Make them feel special too, and you never know how that might work in your favor someday.

The hope of many nonprofits is to convert people from one-time donors to recurring ones. As mentioned earlier, people only want to give to organizations they believe in, and if you make creating the relationship with them as important as the donations they're giving, then they're more likely to jump onto your bandwagon and be convinced the money they're giving up is going towards somewhere important and is making the change they want to see in the world.



# CHANGING THE WAY YOU THINK



## No more tin-cup begging mentality!

One of the ways you can jumpstart your fundraising efforts is by ramping up your story telling while getting away from the begging mentality. The idea here is using personal stories to create an emotional connection with your donors. Instead of just talking about the need for funding of your nonprofit, use testimonials and photos that bring stories to life and those that can really boost your fundraising by changing your message.



Ellen Bristol of the Bristol Strategy Group [wrote in a 2014 blog post](#) about her disdain for the tin-cup mentality and her strong desire to get rid of it:

*"The tin-cup mentality is the state of mind that says 'We're a poor lowly charity! Give us your money because we need it!' Rather than signaling your value to the world, or inviting others to celebrate your triumphs, the tin-cup mentality emphasizes your neediness. Shouting about how poor you are does not inspire confidence among philanthropists, who are your investors. Who wants to make a bad investment? It also gives rise to a terrible fundraising habit, namely, 'Let's raise whatever we can and then figure out how to spend it.'"*

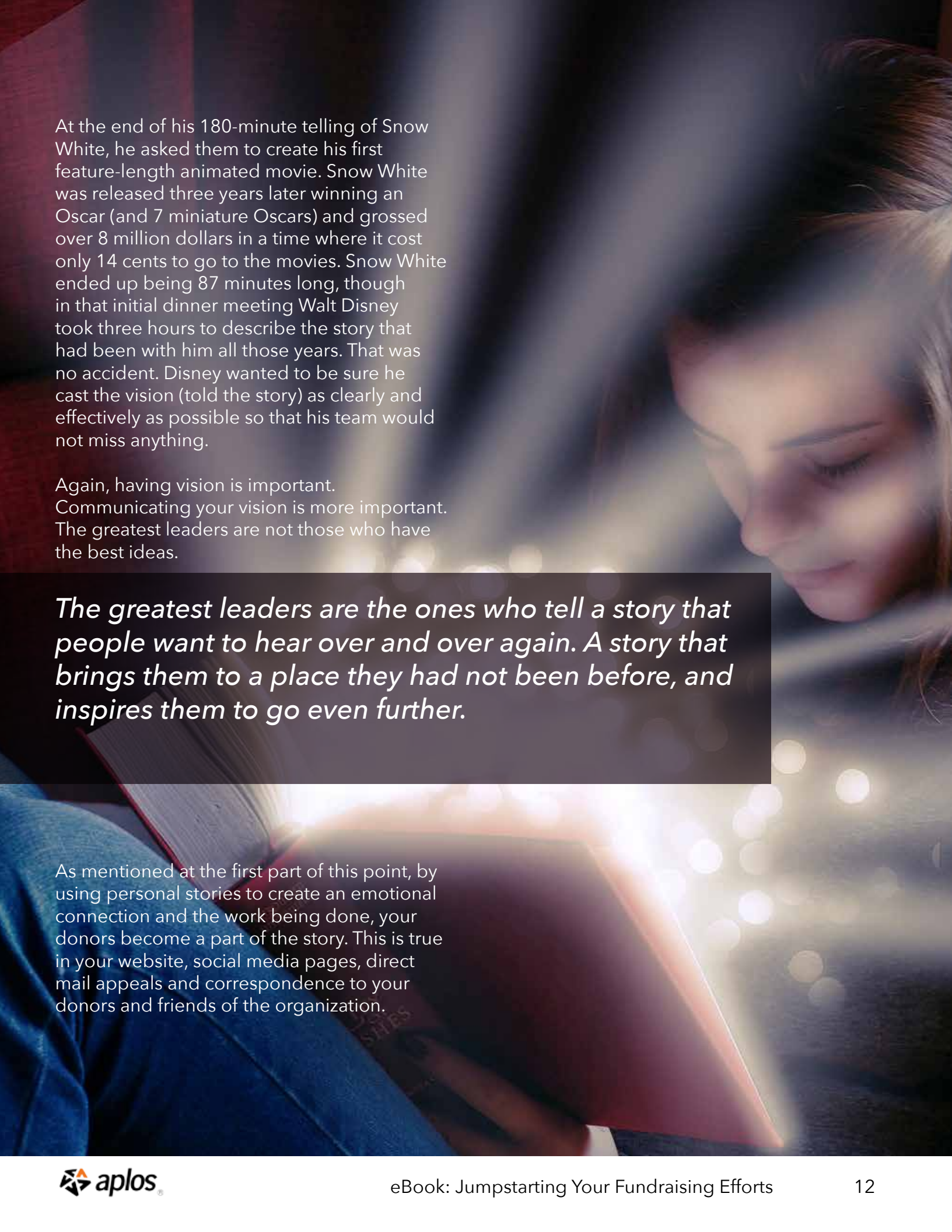
The point here is the messaging and the using of your communication to tell signs of strength and how your donors are making a difference.

## Tell Your Story

Having vision is important. Communicating that vision is more important. Walt Disney was a master storyteller. As great a visionary as he was, many would argue that his most incredible skill was his ability to tell a story effectively.



Three years before Snow White was released in theatres, Walt Disney (pictured above) took his top animators out to dinner. He brought them to a nice restaurant and gave each of them 50 cents for their meal. (At the time, even the highest priced meals did not go over 35 cents. His value of his team did not go unnoticed.) Towards the end of dinner, he dimmed the room lights and began to describe the story of Snow White. According to Walt, it was a story that had been with him his whole life, a story that had stuck with him. It was a story he was deeply passionate about. Over the next three hours he told the story of Snow White to his team making sure not to leave out a single detail. Rumor has it that everyone in the room was completely captivated by his ability as a storyteller as he held the attention of everyone in the room and kept them engaged.



At the end of his 180-minute telling of Snow White, he asked them to create his first feature-length animated movie. Snow White was released three years later winning an Oscar (and 7 miniature Oscars) and grossed over 8 million dollars in a time where it cost only 14 cents to go to the movies. Snow White ended up being 87 minutes long, though in that initial dinner meeting Walt Disney took three hours to describe the story that had been with him all those years. That was no accident. Disney wanted to be sure he cast the vision (told the story) as clearly and effectively as possible so that his team would not miss anything.

Again, having vision is important. Communicating your vision is more important. The greatest leaders are not those who have the best ideas.

*The greatest leaders are the ones who tell a story that people want to hear over and over again. A story that brings them to a place they had not been before, and inspires them to go even further.*

As mentioned at the first part of this point, by using personal stories to create an emotional connection and the work being done, your donors become a part of the story. This is true in your website, social media pages, direct mail appeals and correspondence to your donors and friends of the organization.

# RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

## Meaningful conversations

Regardless of how much money you are trying to raise or your plan to do so, one of the most important aspects of fund development is the strength of building relationships. Nonprofit workers sometimes can get so busy planning and organizing that you and your staff may forget to take time to build and deepen relationships with the people that matter the most – your donors and prospects. What we are talking about here is not going out and asking for money, but having real authentic conversations by getting to know the people that support your organization.

We can't remember where we heard the saying...



*“Money goes where the relationship flows”*



... but it is a great reminder that at the core of good fundraising is the very basic practice of going outside the office and have meaningful conversations with people.

Some of the largest donations we know of started with regular conversations over lunch, coffee, or dinner. This includes quick phone calls to celebrate a birthday or anniversary or other creative ways to connect with your donors and prospects. These are sincere relational conversations, not just some way to get money.

## Who should you reach out to?


**NEW DONORS** – Look for new gifts or unique gifts that have come in recently. Reach out to those new donors and find out more about who they are, why they gave and what their connection is to your organization. This is also a great way to figure out how to involve them further in your organization.

**LONGTIME DONORS** – Believe it or not, sometimes the longtime donors are easy to forget about because we get so used to them and rely on their regular gifts and support. However, making sure you're connecting with those longtime donors is a great way to help them feel valued, and you'll definitely feel energized by having meaningful conversations with people who care deeply about you and the work your doing.

**BOARD MEMBERS** – We will talk about donor engagement in the last section of this eBook, but Board Members are a great resource and can offer lots of insight to you and your organization. Board members care and want to hear stories and updates that go beyond looking at financials and the Executive Director's report. Don't forget about them or ever take them for granted.

**KEY VOLUNTEERS** – Volunteerism is a form of giving. Do not underestimate the value of people giving their time. Adding up the total hours of the volunteers and their hours might be the equivalent of 10-15 fulltime employees which is thousands of dollars in savings for the organization. Be sure and get to know your volunteers and give them a chance to tell their stories which are added value to the work your doing.





If you would like some additional tips and help on building relationships with donors and prospects, there's a great book called *Let's Have Lunch Together* by Marshall Howard. The premise of this book is how to reach out and build powerful relationships. It is easy to read and very practical for getting started and improving in this area.

Don't complicate the relationship building. Having conversations with people should not require a whole new strategic plan or hours of lost time in the office. We heard a great way to look at this from Jeff Brooks, a fantastic fund-raising blogger/writer/thinker in the NPO world. When asked about the secret to good fundraising, Brooks said something like:

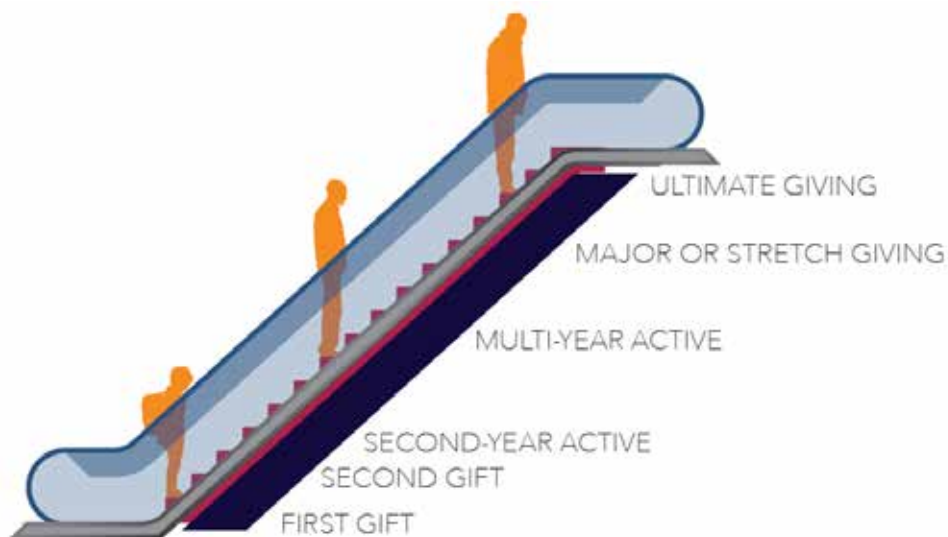
Go.  
Find people.  
Have conversations.  
Listen.  
Share your heart and passion.  
Agree on a plan that results in a measurable impact.  
Celebrate the victories.  
Support each other in the midst of failure.

**Then do it again...  
and again...  
and again.**

We hope you too can go have meaningful conversations and see the power in building solid relationships with your supporters.

# THE DONOR LIFE CYCLE

Here is another way of looking at the pyramid and the funnel, together:



The two go hand-in-hand. Both are needed if you want the best chance possible at being successful.

## Identifying

As far as time and dedication compares to pay off, this may be the hardest stage of the life cycle. You should always be reflecting on the techniques you used to acquire prospects, and the quality of the impressions you're giving of your organization. It can always be improved. If interest is low, then perhaps the strategy should be changed.

## Cultivating

It's important to note that making the ask should not have occurred yet—you're cultivating the relationship and watering the planet. Do not let eagerness overcome you when patience is the better option. Continue to generate their interest until they're engaging you, and sharpen those strategies to a fine point. Always self-reflect to ensure improvement.

## Soliciting

Try to make this step about the mission. They should know that funds are important to the continued existence of your organization, but it isn't the central focus. As soon as someone gets the impression you're only speaking to them because you want something, then they're more likely to shut down, despite the validity of the cause. This is a fine line to walk on, so remember to always update your strategies depending on your success.

## Stewardship

You may have a major donor on your hands, and just don't realize it. Often times, major donors will give an entry gift as a means to test the waters before they become comfortable enough with giving a large sum. This is why nurturing the relationship after the initial donation is so important. When developing your stewardship strategy, create pathways for new donors, current donors, and loyal donors, and then measure donor retention, average gift, revenue per donor, and frequency within each subset.



# REVIEWING YOUR DATABASE

Do you know the commercial that asks “What’s in your wallet?” Well, a good nonprofit organization needs to ask, “What’s in your donor database?” If you are using a donor database at any level (if not, you should be) this can be a gold mine of information and possibilities. Your database is like a closet or storage shed. Instead of storing clothes, stuff or equipment, it is a place where you store information about your donors, volunteers and potential supporters. So, as a way to jumpstart your fundraising efforts, let’s take a minute and look at what’s in your database.

Most donor database systems, even at the very basic level, cost money and need someone to take the time to input the information into the system. So, you need to ask the question, “Why spend time and money on something and not do the upkeep?” This becomes a far too common problem with many nonprofits as they get busy and neglect to do proper upkeep of their database. We’re going to propose that you take some time and do some donor database spring cleaning (no matter what season it is).

## Looking for lost donors

When cleaning or reviewing your donor database, you can start with some real basics like merging, deleting and updating the addresses. Look for lost donors. For a very low fee you can do a National Change of Address (NCOA) search of your database and see if people have moved. You can also search for updated emails or other forms of contact information that have been lost. Many times donors move, change information and you’re the last to know, which can result in lost support.

## Checking for inactivity

Be sure to also check your database for records that have been inactive for a while. Just doing a little detective work and finding out who are the donors who gave last year but not this year. You might consider doing a special appeal or reach out to those who gave last year but not this year.

The screenshot displays the Aplos donor management software interface. The main profile is for William Tell, with details including his contact information, marital status (Megan Russell), and a bar chart showing his giving history from June to May. A magnifying glass highlights the 'Report of Contact' section, which contains two entries: one from 04/02/2017 about an email update and another from 03/03/2017 about a phone call. Other sections visible include 'Reminders', 'Important Dates', 'Groups', and 'Notes'.

<b>Donor Name:</b> William Tell	<b>Last Gift:</b> \$ 255.00 (2017-09-01)
<b>Total Giving:</b> \$ 2,903.00	<b>Remaining Budget:</b> \$ 2,340.00 (2017-09-01)
<b>Married to:</b> Megan Russell	<b>Last Touch:</b> Emailed on 2017-04-02
<b>Contact Info:</b> Tell@Overture.com, 1234 Street Ln., Fresno, CA 93711, USA	<b>Phone:</b> 555-3040, 555-1980
<b>Address:</b> 1234 Street Ln., Fresno, CA 93711, USA	<b>Birthdate:</b> 11/11/2017
<b>Relationships:</b> Russell (Spouse)	<b>Important Dates:</b> 03/19/2011 - Anniversary, 11/11/2017 - Birthday
<b>Report of Contact:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>04/02/2017 - Sent an email, updating William on how the he is going, and thanking him for his continued support.</li><li>03/03/2017 - I called William and we shared stories of our trips to serve.</li></ul>	<b>Reminders:</b> 05/17/2017 - Call William up to talk about his once a year Donation - around 4pm.
<b>Groups:</b> 1099 Vendor Member, Teams Steve	<b>Notes:</b> William prefers not to be called between noon-3pm on tuesdays

## Study who gave and what campaign worked

Which donors have given less/more this year compared to last year? This is another great way to look at your donor database and look for trends and how to connect with your donors. Ask yourself what is working and why did people give less or more.

## How many more/less donors do we have this year over past years?

This is another good way to look at what is working and evaluate what is not. Are there patterns or was it an isolated situation? An example of this might be that sometimes giving can go down if there is an unusual local or national situation like a flood or emergency – during these sorts of events you might see a drop. The point is to take a look at the ups and downs and assess both.

## What stewardship activities have been performed for your top donors during the past year ... and by whom?

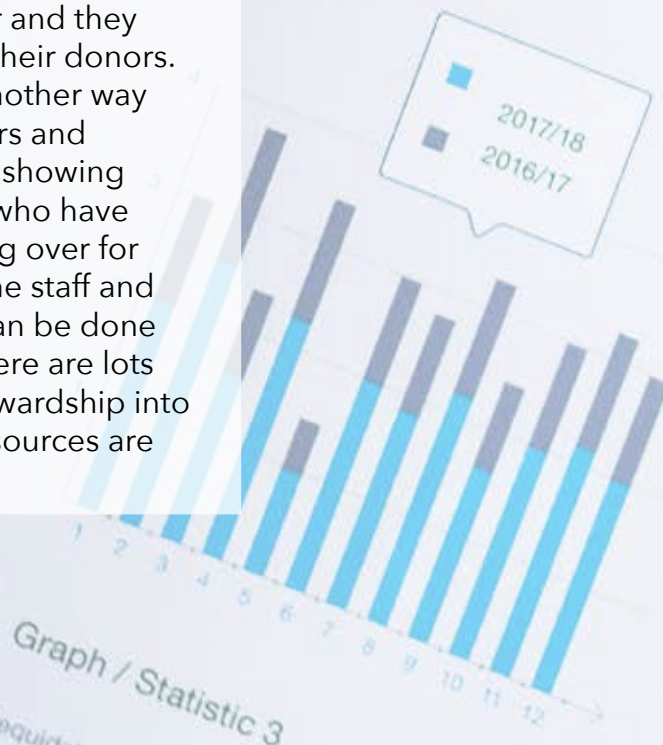
Sometimes nonprofits go from event to event or fundraiser to fundraiser and they do not slow down and steward their donors. Stewardship activities are just another way to thank and engage your donors and supporters. Stewardship can be showing formal appreciation for people who have given at a certain level by inviting over for some coffee and pastries with the staff and leadership team. Stewardship can be done by staff, board or volunteers. There are lots of ways you can incorporate stewardship into your organization and lots of resources are available.

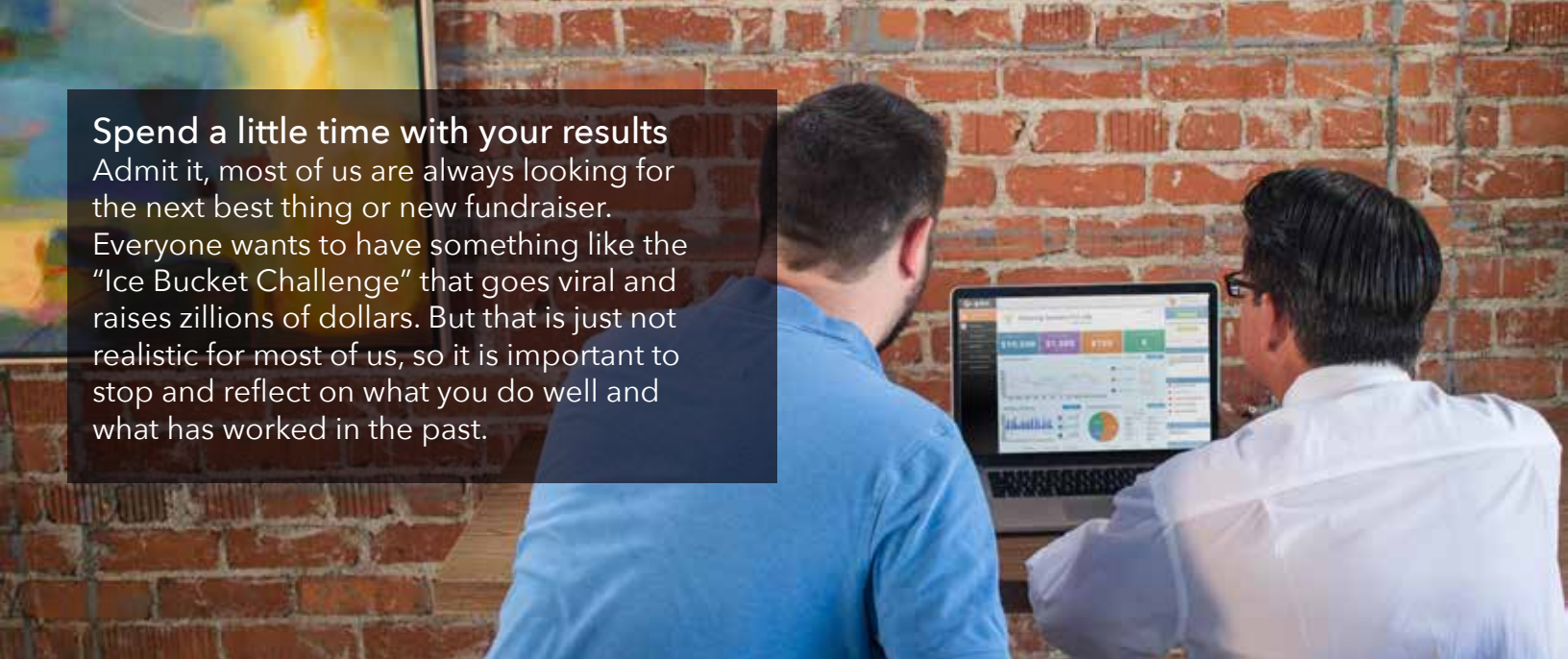
## Adding more people into the database

It is really important that you capture new data as often as you can. Many times organizations will hold events, fundraisers or other activities and forget to obtain simple things like a donor email. The purpose of this is to always be growing your donor database. Using tools like newsletters and website sign-up areas are a great way to begin new relationships and add people to your database.

## Take time to review how you are coding and grouping donors in your database

One of the main reasons for doing this is so that your nonprofit is giving the right message to the right person at the right time. Knowing who your donors are and the relationship they have with you is critical in jumpstarting and growing your fundraising.





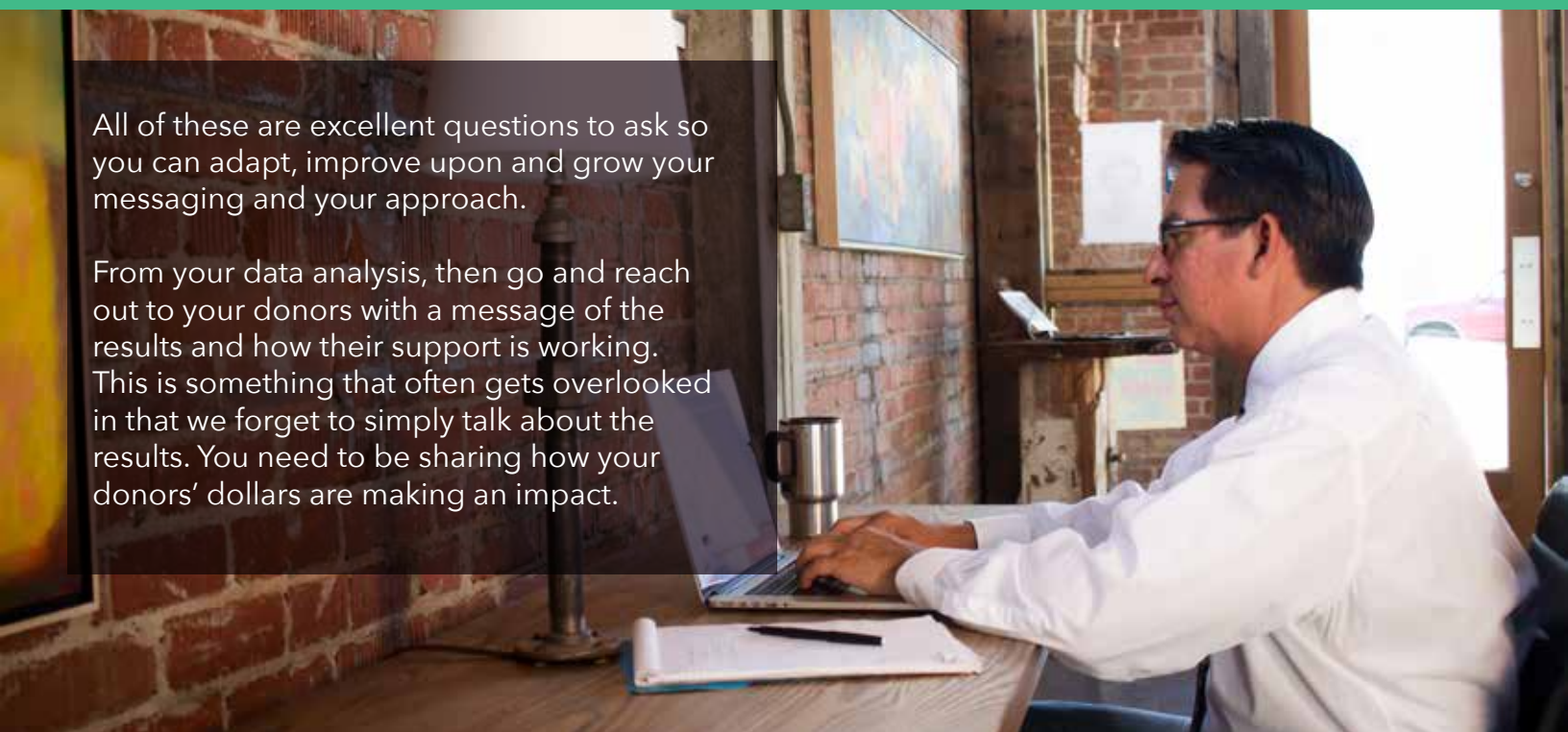
### Spend a little time with your results

Admit it, most of us are always looking for the next best thing or new fundraiser.

Everyone wants to have something like the "Ice Bucket Challenge" that goes viral and raises zillions of dollars. But that is just not realistic for most of us, so it is important to stop and reflect on what you do well and what has worked in the past.

## Your data or results are a great place to look for ideas on messaging.

- What have your donors responded to in the past?
- What areas of your mission have your donors been most interested in?
- What has not worked as well?



All of these are excellent questions to ask so you can adapt, improve upon and grow your messaging and your approach.

From your data analysis, then go and reach out to your donors with a message of the results and how their support is working. This is something that often gets overlooked in that we forget to simply talk about the results. You need to be sharing how your donors' dollars are making an impact.

# REVIEW YOUR FUNDRAISING PLAN

For many nonprofit organizations, raising money can be one of the most challenging issues you face. Finding the donors and the dollars to advance your mission and grow your organization requires planning and follow-through. A fundraising plan is a road map to help identify your organization's goals, plans and timelines, and it will also help you meet your financial goals.

Because there are a number of ways to raise money, your fundraising plan is an opportunity to flesh out which options are best for your specific organization.

A solid fundraising plan, no matter how big or small, keeps you focused on the most effective means of drawing in the dollars. Because most nonprofit organizations struggle with the same issue of having too much to do with not enough time to do everything, a solid fundraising plan will help your organization keep focused and it will help prioritize the the important steps to meet or exceed their financial goals.

My Plan:

At the very core of a fundraising plan, the following elements should be considered:

What funding is needed – how much, what types of activities, when?

Where funds will come from?

What activities need to happen to raise funds, when do they need to happen and who will do them?

## Sample Fundraising Plan

Strategy (activity)	Goals Numbers-Dollars-Percentage	Actual	Target Audience	Action Steps	Who	When	Cost-Budget
Intimate Dinner Party	\$10,000 12 people Charge for dinner and ask for donation/Pledges to your nonprofit		3 (couples) Key Board Members, 3 donors and 3 prospects (identified by staff and board)	Place-Menu-Special guests-video or testimony	Lead Person(s)	Date, Time Location	Cost
Direct Mail Appeal Campaign	\$8,000 Mail to 2,000 people		Donors who have given in the past three years.	Write-develop message-Materials needed.	Lead Person(s)	Date to mail or post on website	Cost
Charity Fun Run	\$15,000		Friends of organization and community at-large	Plan Details-Create a planning sheet for all steps	Lead Person(s)	Date Time Place	Advertising Materials Food Etc.  Separate Budget Sheet for Event is helpful
Corporate Donations Support	\$25,000		Local merchants, banks, businesses	Create sponsorship packets-set up appointments-list of target companies	Lead Person(s)  Committee	Ongoing	Materials  Mailings

# SAYING THANK YOU

## Have you called your donors just to say “thanks?”

Aplos donor management specialist, Dan Kimball, recently received a video text message from a friend’s 6-year-old daughter who was asking for Dan and his wife to support her upcoming school fun run. He, of course, said yes (who could say no to such an adorable plea!). Later that evening, he received another video from the same girl saying “Thank-You, Thank-You, Thank-You” for supporting her. It was simple yet very powerful. The lesson here is that you can never down play or forget the power in thanking your donors and supporters.

This strategy doesn’t work for all demographics, but for many donors, receiving a call from a board member or staff person, who gives them a quick update and says, “It’s all thanks to you... thank you for your support!” is a real motivator.

Thanking donors is very different then sending an acknowledgement or receipt. What we are talking about here is extra efforts and small tokens of appreciation: a thank-you call, hand-written thank you notes, Valentine’s day cards, birthday cards etc. Even small gifts that are appropriate, personal and within your budget.

Can your organization run a “thank-a-thon” to make these calls once per year? This can be done with staff, volunteers or program participants and recipients.

Be sure and use a variety of formats when thanking donors and make them personal. Think: email and social media like Facebook or Instagram, live events and utilizing your website, etc.



# CREATING A SPECIFIC DONATION PAGE

Giving the donors an option to give to a very specific need with a dollar value will help make your giving page stand out.

Example: *A young girl walks home after collecting water in rural Rwanda. \$20 can give one person access to clean drinking water for 20 years.*

Help today: [charitywater.org/donate](https://charitywater.org/donate)

**Make Giving Easy** – Not only in a simple effective message but making it easy with a link or 'donate now' button easy to find and easy to donate.

Other examples might be how much to feed a child for a day, or the cost of a meal for a homeless shelter, cost of supplies...etc.



# PUBLISH AN E-NEWSLETTER

## Keep it short and impactful

The growth and simplicity of do-it-yourself e-newsletters have given nonprofits more access and opportunities to communicate to their donors and supporters in a very cost-effective way. At the same time, many e-newsletters are too long and groups are trying to cram in far too much information. With this, you risk losing the main message and the reader's attention. Try and pick one or two things you want to communicate and do well.

## Leveraging storytelling

Going back to the earlier section on effective story telling... when writing an e-newsletter (a newsletter in email form) ask yourself:

## Mobile Friendly

Be sure that your e-newsletter is mobile friendly. More people than ever before are reading email and newsletters from mobile devices and smart phones. It is really important that your e-newsletter fits all formats for engaged readership.

## Look at other websites/best practices

A great way to improve your own newsletter is to look at best practices. Put yourself in the shoes of a donor and read other e-newsletters to see what works and what would make you want to give or get involved with another nonprofit.

## *Does your newsletter tell a story?*

Be sure to use strong calls to action. How should people respond? Where is the donate now button? Give the readers of your newsletter an idea of how they should respond.

Suggest a donation amount and frequency. Along with your donate now and giving page, give donors an idea of how much to give – or specific purposes to give to.

Example: \$20/\$40/\$60 a month for 12 months can change the life of a child.



# GROW YOUR SUSTAINABLE GIVING

For many NPO's, a large portion of total donations probably comes from monthly donors. In fact, often times monthly donor's donations total more than one-time donors.

Consider asking donors/supporters to give a smaller sum each month instead of a large one-time amount. Creating lifelong relationships are a powerful way to grow your giving over time.

You can also offer tribute and memorial giving to honor family, friends and loved ones. This allows them to donate to your organization in their name or memory in lieu of presents.

You will also want to capture visitors with your social media sites or webpage and be sure to offer them a free newsletter subscription or follow-up information about your organization.

As you grow your sustainable giving program, you can segment your donors, potential donors and supporters into specific groups for future fundraising or an immediate campaign or purpose.





# ENGAGE AND MOBILIZE YOUR BOARD

How engaged and involved is your board? Many nonprofits struggle with this topic and it's the basis for hundreds of books, articles and websites. Everyone who works in nonprofits at some point struggles with this topic.

## Three things everyone can do:

1) Give Money 2) Give names 3) Participate

If your board gives, they will be more likely to ask others to get involved. Try and get everyone to give at some level. The more they give, the more they become invested in the organization.

Donors usually want to know if you have 100% board giving. The important thing for boards to know is that potential donors really want to know how engaged the board is. Not only with their time, but with their giving. Of course, giving is private and the amounts can be confidential (unless someone wants it to be known) but to say you have 100% board giving will go a long way.

Give your board the proper training and materials to help raise money. If board members are not properly trained, they won't feel ready to ask for money from others. In the same way that you educate the board on the work you do, train them and give them the needed material to help raise money on behalf of your nonprofit.

View board engagement as a partnership rather than "an us vs. them" mentality.

## Board Involvement: Ideas to get your Board involved

- Making thank you calls
- Signing letters
- Participating at events
- Board profiles in your publications
- Board testimonials & Other testimonials at board meetings
- Delivering gifts, photos, logo items
- Making introductions - Open Doors



# LEVERAGING DONOR MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

It was mentioned earlier that fundraising is as much an art as it is a science. But what exactly did that mean? People these days are able to quantify literally anything, and these numbers manifesting from events or other interactions with prospects can be useful for fundraising intelligently. This is where donor management software can come into play.

While you may be able to identify trends in data on a spreadsheet, donor management systems are capable of pulling the data you need and generating hundreds of reports, depending on what you're looking for. And once you've pulled those reports and analyzed the data, donor management allows you to track trends amongst your donors or with specific campaigns. Where are you at with your goals for fundraising, and what percentage of your donors have lapsed? Which of your campaigns have attracted the large-time donors?

You may try to strong-arm it and make the decisions you can make without a DM system, but there are other benefits associated with using a streamlined system specializing in managing your donors—after all, you still have to worry about how the end-user is interacting with your website and software. According to [this survey by PRNewswire](#), not only do organizations that fail to deliver glitch-free online transactions pay a hefty toll in transaction abandonment, but “91% of those who have experienced problems question companies’ ability to keep private data secure.” A system that supplies everything from data encryption and intrusion monitoring to firewalls and security policies wins the trust of valued members by delivering the comprehensive protection they deserve.



This kind of software is a comprehensive solution, and has great scalability for your operation, growing in tandem with the size of your member base. If you look at the report cited on this Capterra post, [6 Reasons Your Non-profit Needs Donor Management Software](#), “A key advantage of new technology platforms is the ability to very rapidly scale up (and down) to handle fluctuations in user numbers, field offices, data volumes, and process flows...allowing modern organizations to cope with rapid business change.”

If you're currently evaluating donor management software for your organization, we encourage you to [give Aplos a try](#). We are currently offering 50% off the first six months if you purchase our donor management software within the free trial period.

# CONCLUSION

This e-book was meant to take you through the process of approaching a donor, acquiring them, keeping them, and then using their data as a means to acquire more donors via donor management.

Traditionally, the focus of fundraising was to view donors as a means to an end, but as it turns out, it's more effective to view donors as what they are—people. People who want to be noticed and taken care of – to be recognized. Treat them how they want to be treated and you may find that they'll give your organization the same care and respect you deserve. So, good luck!





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