Building Meaningful DONOR CONNECTIONS in a COVID World
As the world deals with the ongoing social distancing measures, it may seem we are all isolated and separate, but in truth we are all deeply connected and still looking for meaningful interactions everyday. Donors especially, are craving authentic connections to the causes that are important to them amidst the current crisis.

There are several ways that your nonprofit can ensure your messaging stands out, reflects a deep understanding of your supporters and creates a long-lasting connection, even during these trying times. And no, we don’t mean simply addressing donors by their first name. We mean easy, actionable (and even fun) ways of connecting. First, we’ll share the three pillars on which to base an effective donor-centric messaging plan. Then we’ll walk you through six expert strategies to create richer relationships with donors so they feel understood, inspired and engaged with your cause now and in the future.

Supporters want to play an active role in building hope for others, just like you do. Read on to learn how your nonprofit can create an opportunity for meaningful connections and continue your good work fighting for your mission.

LET'S GET STARTED!
THE THREE PILLARS OF DONOR-CENTRIC RELATIONSHIPS

1. UNDERSTAND YOUR SUPPORTERS

Understanding your donors is about a lot more than unearthing giving habits and demographics, although they are important pieces of the puzzle. The focus should be on the end goal, which is how you want your donors to feel: recognized, known, inspired. It requires you to pay attention and take a close look at all the data available on your various supporters. Most importantly, always sound human. Knowing your donors means you recognize that they want to be communicated with in a real, authentic and personal way. Ditch the super-stiff formality and show them you are, as Barbra Streisand would say, people who need people.

67% of donors are highly likely to support a donor-centered nonprofit indefinitely1

2. TARGET YOUR MESSAGE

Now that you’re getting to know your supporters better, it’s time to make sure you’re sending the right message to the right donor. For instance, you may find young supporters are more active on social media and use more emojis. Text messaging is largely adopted cross-generationally and a great way to reach a variety of donors. You’ll also want to address first-time donors differently than those in your monthly membership program or people who have attended your events vs. those who have not. Being thoughtful about what you say, how you say it and when/where you say it can go a long way in creating a long-lasting connection with your audience.

44% of nonprofit donors would give or volunteer more for a more personalized experience2

3. INVOLVE DONORS IN THE OUTCOME

One of the best ways to endear donors to your cause and build a strong relationship is to help them feel a part of the success, as well as the struggle, of your organization. Don’t just let them know about your mission and beneficiaries, but also what their support accomplishes and how it’s crucial to the lives of those you serve. The more donors feel responsible for helping you achieve your mission, the more likely they are to continue their support.

55% of donors never or rarely receive measurable results on their gifts at work1
SIX WAYS TO BUILD MEANINGFUL DONOR CONNECTIONS

1. CREATE DONOR SURVEYS

One of the best ways to get to know and understand your supporters is by asking about them directly. With donor surveys you can ask about anything from their communication preferences and general interest to how they found out about your cause and favorite pastimes. Your audience will appreciate you taking an active interest and your nonprofit will glean some valuable insight into who you are messaging and how to better serve them.

- Send surveys via text message or email
- Send for first-time, lapsed or active donors
- Follow-up for peer-to-peer donors
- Ask about information unrelated to donating or donation amounts
- See what they’d like more of from your organization
- Keep your survey brief and engaging

Complicated jargon and multiple part questions can muddy your intent and the results. Make sure your questions are direct, to the point and require a focused answer.
2. SEGMENT YOUR DONORS

By now, you probably know that you shouldn’t be sending the same “one-size fits all” message on all platforms and to all supporters. Segmenting your donors allows you to send the right appeal letter, thank you, social post, text or update to the right donor at the right time. Tailoring your messaging in this way helps donors feel understood, appreciated, encourages continued giving and inspires spreading the word of your good work.

Break your donor list up into smaller, targeted lists based on:

### Giving history
- New donors
- Recurring donors
- One-time donors
- Long-term supporters
- Giving levels
- Peer-to-peer donors

### Additional Information
- Volunteer involvement
- Events attended/donated to
- Communication preferences
- Age
- Demographics
- Program interests

59% of donors said they’d give up to 10% more for a more personalized experience.²
3. HOLD CUSTOM LIVESTREAMS

Looking for a fun and personal way to connect with donors remotely (and honestly, who isn’t these days)? Try holding a custom livestream aimed at a particular segment of your audience. This will make supporters feel special, like they are invited to an ‘insider’ event and truly valued by your organization. The goal doesn’t have to be soliciting donations. Focus on creating meaningful connections that will keep donors engaged and sharing your mission on your behalf.

**Custom Livestream Ideas:**

- “Welcome Party” livestream for new donors
- “What’s New” livestream for established donors
- “Members Only” livestream for donors in monthly membership programs
- “Behind the Scenes” livestream for major donors and sponsors

Social video generates **12Xs more shares** than text and images combined.
4. SEND PERSONALIZED TEXT MESSAGES

Texting is a personal channel: a direct connection to your donors wherever they may be. It’s because it’s such a personal way of reaching out that nonprofits like yours should be using text messaging more often. How do you use texting in the right way so it doesn’t feel spammy or intrusive? Personalize it! Come from the heart and share pertinent info your supporters will welcome. Not all your text messages need to be or should be appeals. In fact, you should always send several meaningful messages before asking for donations.

Texting Strategies:

- Always use the donor’s first name
- Use a personal image of your cause to help resonate with a specific donor
- Provide timely program updates
- Let donors know where their dollars are going
- Include a link for more info or a video
- Milestones your nonprofit has reached
- Updates on beneficiaries
- Words of encouragement
- Bible verse, daily encouragement or ‘word of the day’

98% of text messages are read

90% of texts are read within 3 min of being sent
SIX WAYS TO BUILD MEANINGFUL DONOR CONNECTIONS

5. SHOWCASE THE IMPACT OF GIVING

Sharing impact is less about the gift or donation amount and more about building trust and involving donors in the outcome of your organization’s story. Position your donor first in your messaging to reflect not a “help us save a life” but rather, here’s how “you can save a life.” This shift alone helps empower your donors to make a difference for your beneficiaries. Share impact stories and metrics on your website, donation page, thank yous and all communication channels.

Defining impact clearly:

☐ What does $10, $25, $100 go towards?
☐ How exactly will it make a difference?
☐ When will it make a difference?
☐ How does this get your org closer to achieving your mission?
☐ Try highlighting a beneficiary success story

49% of donors are concerned how nonprofits use their donations

5
6. TAILOR YOUR FORMS AND PAGES

Hone in on what drives your donors to take action by creating **custom-tailored forms and donation pages**. Highlight not only different giving levels, but also different positioning for a comprehensive message for first-time donors vs. legacy donors. Leverage all the great info from your donor surveys and segmentation to craft inspiring language, reinforce your brand story and set giving at a level your audience can and will say yes to.

**Tips and Tricks:**

- Tailor donation pages based on segmentation and giving levels
- Think strategically about donation amounts for different audiences
- Remind donors why they want to give
- Always brand your donation page consistently
- Pre-select suggested donation amounts by giving history

75% of first-time donors won’t give again

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**OTIS IS ESSENTIAL**

All donations to the OTIS IS ESSENTIAL campaign support five areas of critical and immediate need within the College: Students and Faculty & Staff. Student support includes funding for scholarships and to assist those facing unexpected financial needs as a result of the COVID-19 health crisis. Faculty & Staff funding will help us continue the excellent teaching and learning the College is known for.

If you have any questions or would like to speak with a member of the Institutional Advancement team, please click here.

**Gift Amount**

$ 50.00

Contact information

First Name

Last Name

**OTIS IS ESSENTIAL**

Essential Donor

Gifts of $4,000 and above.

Essential Donors are recognized for their generosity and profound impact on OTIS students, faculty, and staff.

Please fill out the form below to be a member of our Institutional Advancement team. Contact you regarding your gift. Your information will not be shared or used for any other purposes than your donation. We look forward to connecting with you!

Your Information

First Name

Last Name

Do you have any questions or comments regarding your Essential Donor gift?

**OTIS IS ESSENTIAL**

Leadership Donor

Gifts of $25,000 and above.

Leadership Donors are distinguished for their exceptional generosity and profound impact on OTIS students, faculty, and staff.

Please fill out the form below and a member of our Institutional Advancement team will contact you regarding your gift. Your information will not be shared or used for any other purposes than your donation. We look forward to connecting with you!

Your Information

First Name

Last Name

Do you have any questions or comments regarding your Leadership gift?
With these ideas and tools, you’ll be able to more effectively connect with your supporters in meaningful ways and bring in more long-term donors, broaden awareness and increase giving, whether that’s during COVID-19 or anytime in the future.

**SOURCE**
1. Cygnus Applied Research, Inc. Statistical Data from Donor-Centered Fundraising
2. Accenture Consulting - Constituents Expect More--And Will Give More
3. Wordstream. (2020, February) 37 Staggering Video Marketing Statistics for 2018
4. MobileCause annual donor data year-ending 2019

**About MobileCause**
MobileCause is more than simply comprehensive fundraising software. We offer nonprofits one-on-one assistance from our Digital Fundraising Strategists plus 24/7 customer support that’s there when you need it. MobileCause believes 100% of the donation should go directly to your cause, so we never charge a transaction fee. MobileCause enables you to maximize your resources and grow your mission like never before.

To speak directly to a fundraising consultant about implementing MobileCause online and event fundraising software and strategy for your nonprofit, please call (888) 661-8804 or visit mobilecause.com to request a demo.