

First steps in Public Fundraising for small charities

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PRINCIPLES

- As humans we are always delighted to be asked for help, particularly when we've expressed a desire to be involved. So don't be afraid to ask, or awkward about accepting - it's as much about the Supporter as it is about you!
- Donations come from your Supporters. As a small, local organisation, your advantage is your ability to develop meaningful relationships with people who genuinely care about your work and it's impact.
- Supporters are people who value the work of your organisation and want to be part of the broader community to make it successful. They might volunteer, share social media posts, recommend you, make a donation or fundraise on your behalf. They might do all of these.
- Be open to how your Supporters might want to be involved, and provide opportunities for them to shape what that might look like.
- Be open to the fact there will be a mix amongst your Supporters:
 - Those who have a clear idea of how, and when they want to be involved. They need to be able to connect with someone and talk it through.
 - Those with no time to think, or who can't see a place for them to support. They need defined calls to action.
- Keep listening to your Supporters to understand why they support you, and what they want to support you with. Your Supporters are close to you - develop trusting and valued relationships.
- Comms is central to developing your Supporter community - they need to hear what's happening, and how they can be involved. And the beauty is they are probably very closely aligned to your values and what you do!
- Align your comms plan - your Supporters are close to your work, the messaging can be consistent across all audiences. The additional for donors is thanking them, and calls to action.

BUILDING YOUR SUPPORTER COMMUNITY

STEP ONE - Create opportunity to connect

- Create a simple first step to connect, learn more and keep up to date. Have a newsletter sign up - on website, social media and email footers.
- Consider having a 'Get Involved' page on your website. Keep this simple / high level so people can see how they might get involved, but make an action to get in touch if they want to do more.

STEP TWO - Forge a connection

- Follow up with new sign-ups (automate if possible). Send three onboarding emails as standard. E.g.
 1. Thank you for signing up with a story about someone who uses your services.
 2. A bit more about us - our story, and where we are going.
 3. Ways to get involved - social media, share, volunteer (you define).

STEP THREE - Communicate regularly

- Communicate regularly - fortnightly or monthly emails.
- Alternate between updates/stories/news and opportunities to support.
- Opportunities to support can be small (like and share Social Media) as well as requests to donate at key points in the year / as part of a campaign.

WHEN SOMEONE IS READY TO DONATE

STEP ONE - Make Giving Easy

- Clear donate button on website, and on any 'Get Involved' page, as well as via email footers.
- Ask for the right amount of information - enough for you to contact them, but not too much to make it a big task. Name, email, permission to contact is a great start.
- Gathering more information can come as part of building the relationship.

STEP TWO - Don't make one off anonymous donations the default

- Make giving either a one off or monthly donation a standard option on your donate page.
- Research giving platforms which provide you with the information you need, give you that data, and are simple to use for the Supporter.

STEP THREE - Say thank you!

- Make sure that the automated response they receive isn't just a receipt from your payment platform, but a genuine expression of gratitude.
- Follow up with them to say thank you on the phone or via personal email. Ask 'what inspired you to give'. Keep a note and learn!

STEP FOUR - Nurture the relationship

- Sign them up to the newsletter
- Give them other opportunities to be involved.
- Don't assume their gift is a one off, or feel awkward. Remember:

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STEP FIVE - Keep going!

- As you grow your support from donations there will be some difficult moments, and it might start to feel unwieldy. But keep going. Get it over the hump. Bring in some support if needed. It will be worth it.
- Listen and learn! Understand YOUR Supporters.