

CRM & Marketing Automation for Nonprofits:

Optimized Donor Management to Build Strong Relationships



The Nonprofit Market Today

Nonprofit organizations, big and small, face all sorts of challenges from shrinking budgets to increasingly hesitant donors. And with an economic recession on the horizon and rising inflation, the donors that nonprofits depend upon are becoming more cautious over who, and what, they are giving to. Research found that 63% of donors reported being more cautious with their giving. This trend is something that existed even before the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional research from 2019 found that only 19% of those surveyed said they highly trusted charities. But even with growing scrutiny, 98% of donors do still intend to give, even if only 21% of those planned to give more than the year prior. In this industry, there can be no nonprofit without donors.

Fundraising is the lifeblood of these organizations, requiring monumental efforts to help drive a lasting impact in their respective fields. For every 1,000 fundraising messages sent, nonprofits raised \$90. With that in mind, it's clear just how important building strong relationships with donors can be.

The number of contacts and donors needed to drive a nonprofit's operations means email lists and marketing efforts are only going to grow over the coming years. And as it does, CRM platforms will be essential to make the most of opportunities and build strong relationships that are capable of withstanding greater scrutiny, while reducing costs and staying within a tightening budget.

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Implementing the Right Nonprofit CRM & Marketing Automation Software, the Right Way

It all comes down to relationships—capturing interest from donors means building a strong foundation of trust to keep them coming back. In an environment where giving is becoming more selective, these organizations need to be able to reach out to as many targets as possible, while still building strong, personalized connections.

So, nonprofits need to reach donors, but contacting people too frequently runs the risk of causing donor fatigue—a reality that ranks among the top concerns for many charitable organizations. With a CRM solution, you can customize messages to donors and ensure that the information you're sending resonates with the people reading them.

Finding the right CRM solution for nonprofits starts with tailoring the tools to meet the unique needs of your organization. Start by getting a closer look at your day-to-day activities and operations. Nonprofits have a lot going on at any given time, with activities including volunteer management, outreach, event management, fundraising campaigns, online donations and social media management. Effective implementation requires you to look at each of those activities that apply to you, and pair it up with the right CRM solution.

For nonprofits especially, a CRM solution needs to be budget-friendly while still providing the ability to help them cultivate and strengthen donor relationships. From there, look for a CRM solution that enables your organization to manage both online and offline donations, track event attendance, phone conversations and every interaction in between.

Optimize Your Nonprofit CRM

Out of necessity, nonprofits have deep contact lists of donors, volunteers, stakeholders and others to keep track of, build relationships with and train. If nonprofits want to achieve their full potential, all of that data needs to be integrated. But if you're managing donors in one spreadsheet, volunteers in another, you're not only creating unnecessary labor, but also leaving opportunities for revenue growth untapped.

A CRM solution can save time, improve relationships and make operations much more manageable. Here are just a few ways that nonprofits can optimize their CRM:

Centralized data management

With a revolving door of volunteers and a constantly expanding list of regular, and potential, donors, being disorganized can prove fatal to nonprofits. Getting a handle on, and centralizing, all of a nonprofit's data makes it easier to track donor relations and past interactions, helping to forge stronger connections. A CRM platform can optimize your data management, capturing details from donors, volunteers, sponsors and grants, among others all in one organized, easily searchable location.

For an industry that hinges on its relationships, this feature is critical. With all of that data centralized, you can simply pull up a given contact's details and view every donation they've made or event they've attend. Or in the case of volunteers, you can track who is responsible for what tasks, and how to best allocate resources. In all, no matter what the intent, centralizing internal data unlocks a plethora of opportunities, all in just a few clicks—no more hunting down spreadsheets and databases.

User-friendly CRM interface

A CRM built for nonprofits is only useful if the people who rely on it understand how to use it. These organizations are a mix of professionals, part-timers and volunteers, often with a high rate of turnover. All of that means there's a steady stream of new faces coming in that require training on internal tools. You could have the best CRM software on hand, but if the user interface is complex or convoluted, training people to use it can be an exercise in futility and a big waste of time.

Optimizing your CRM platform with an easy-to-use interface makes getting critical donor information into the system easier, and enables employees and volunteers to navigate the CRM platform whether they've been with the nonprofit for five years, or five days.

Leveraging Marketing Automation for Nonprofits

Marketing automation (MA) has the potential to transform nonprofit communications and fundraising practices. But research has shown adoption hasn't followed as quickly as other industries, with only 34% of respondents stating they leverage email automation. Failing to incorporate MA features into your nonprofit operations will only hamper your ability to follow up with donors, volunteers and other audiences.

While it may not seem essential on its face, MA is about much more than just sending automated responses on email and social media. The right solutions make it possible to automate key marketing workflows and stay engaged with key stakeholders.

Allegiant Giving: Growing a Database of over 4,300 Prospects, Partners, Donors and Participants in Act!



We are constantly reaching out to people who don't know who we are. That means communicating with them in a way that shows we know what we are doing. We have to tell our story well and present it professionally right from the start.



Michael Matthews,
Co-Founder, Allegiant Giving

Here are a couple of different ways MA can empower nonprofits to engage donors and strengthen relationships more effectively.

Email Marketing Campaigns

How many of us can think of a time where we've received an email from a nonprofit or charitable organization? Probably most, if not all, of us have at some point. Email campaigns are unquestionably some of the most important tools in a nonprofit's arsenal. Whether it's notifying volunteers about trainings or ensuring you invite every major donor to the next big event, the right CRM and MA solutions make it easier than ever to hit the right contacts, all with just a few clicks.

Utilizing email MA, nonprofits can map out email flows that will automatically follow up with donors anytime a contribution is made or when someone reaches out to inquire about the organization. It also presents an opportunity to reach interested individuals, identifying opportunities to educate relevant donors through newsletters that highlight all the work the nonprofit is doing, sharing the most informative and relevant updates.

With features offering greater personalization and customizability, nonprofits can always send the right message to the right audience, at the right time, leveraging MA to differentiate the organization with personalized campaigns and landing pages with professional, turnkey templates.

Landing Pages

Success hinges on how well you're able to reach and attract donors, prospects and other stakeholders. Landing pages are a great way to build a pipeline of prospective donors, while also gauging what matters to your target audiences with forms and surveys. With [landing pages](#), nonprofits can create workflows that ensure the latest information is always captured. Leveraging these features, nonprofits can create landing pages that incorporate donation forms that flow directly into their CRM, updating contact information, donation values and other pertinent details.

Once a donation happens on one of those landing pages, that data can then be fed through the CRM platform and used to trigger processes that send out a thank you email via MA campaigns. Small touches like this can have a major impact, ensuring the personal element is never lost, no matter how big the list of donors and prospects becomes.

MA Expert Corner



Kristin Gray
*Act! Marketing
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Tip: Use marketing campaigns to send accurate donation tiers and requests to your database. With a CRM platform, store data, like donation tiers, that each donor fits into. Then use list segmentation in your CRM to keep these tiers and donors organized in your database.

In Conclusion

As donors place more scrutiny on who, and what, they give their money to, it's becoming more important for nonprofits to create and sustain strong relationships with those people. With the right CRM solution and MA platform, nonprofits can reach target donors and manage their most critical relationships in a more impactful way. When it's time to incorporate your marketing strategy, an [all-in-one CRM and marketing automation tool](#) can streamline implementation, making for smooth integration into other software within your tech stack.