



CLIENT SAMPLE

SAMPLE 90-DAY DONOR COMMUNICATION PLAN

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Summary

Donors are essential to the success of every nonprofit. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are communicating accurately, effectively, and honestly with them.

This program is designed as a starting point for nonprofits to evaluate their current avenues of communication with donors and potentially create additional points of contact with donors and volunteers.

Each month includes a short introduction to the topic of the month and a week-by-week schedule of projects.

These projects do not take much time and can take place at any point during the week.

Month One - Preparation

This month is really about getting your organization ready for the changes coming in the next few months. One of the biggest mistakes most groups make is jumping head first into a project without having set up a follow-up plan in advance.

During the next few weeks, you are going to be learning more about your staff, your donors, and your website.

Month One, Week One: Goals/Responsibilities

Goals: You should have goals! It could be doubling your Facebook following, raising \$3000 for a specific project, or getting 50 new monthly members, goals are a fantastic metric to be striving for. Set weekly and monthly goals for each of your departments.

Responsibilities: You and your staff need to decide this week who is responsible for what aspects of this project. Assign each member a job, or two, and check on their progress throughout the next few weeks. Donor relations cannot be one of those jobs that is “whoever has a free moment” kind of things!

Month One, Week One (Continued)

Donor Communication Responsibilities

- Social Media Manager
Assigned to_____
- Donor Newsletter
Assigned to_____
- Volunteer Newsletter
Assigned to_____
- Donor Main Contact
Assigned to_____
- Volunteer Main Contact
Assigned to_____
- Volunteer Thank You Letter Writer
Assigned to_____
- Donor Thank You Letter Writer
Assigned to_____
- Corporate Donation Contact
Assigned to_____
- Alternative Donations Contact
Assigned to_____
- Membership Coordinator
Assigned to_____
- Membership Main Contact
Assigned to_____
- Membership Thank You Letter Writer
Assigned to_____
- Membership Newsletter
Assigned to_____

Month One, Week Two: Donor Profile

This requires some collaboration between the entire staff and possibly some of the board. This is just a discussion to get some ideas in your head for the next few weeks.

With your staff answer the following questions and discuss them:

Current Donors

- Who is someone who has been an “average” donor for years?
- Where do they live?
- What do they look like?
- What events do they come to?
- How do we communicate with them?

Potential Donors

- Who else could we be talking to?
- Where do they live?
- What events do they like?
- How do we talk to them?

Month One, Week Three: Digital Preparation

This week is going to be pretty tech intensive. Get together with your web guru and make sure your website has the basics:

- Links work (all clicks on the site work)
- Up to date content/info
- Place to donate (clear donate button/pages)
- Set up well (logical, easy to find, not overwhelming text)
- "About" page/section
- Staff/board page
- Who is in charge of what (with contact info)
- Newsletter integration (signup is prominent on your site and segment integrations work, e.g. donors go on donor list)

Then you are going to want to answer the next few questions:

1. How well does your website tell your story?
 - Story of the organization, its origin, it's reason for being
 - Stories from people directly benefited by your organization (written stories are great, photos are better, and video can be even better)
 - Are you using video? If not, could you?
 - Stories of impact, of positive change created by your organization (and by proxy, your donors)
2. How easy are you to give to?
 - Is the donation experience easy and compelling?
 - How many clicks is it?
 - How easy is your form to fill out?
 - How do you do you handle end-of-year receipts and donation thank you's?

Month One, Week Three (Continued)

3. How easy is it for your website visitors to view information on news, events, updates etc.?

Month One, Week Four: Soft Live Test Week

This week is pretty simple. Make sure your website and all of your donation programs and links are live. Go over your website (or have a spouse/friend) try to donate online.

Were they able to?

Fix any problems that come up and to repeat this process several times over the week. This is just trial and error.

Don't worry, there are almost always a few bugs to work out.

Month Two: Social Media Month

Now that you have worked out the kinks on the website, it is time to move onto communication. Social media is the most direct contact your organization has with most donors. It is important to make sure that your messaging is clear and consistent.

This month, you and your team are going to be focusing on your profiles, scheduling, and evaluating.

Month Two, Week One: Profile/Page Updates

Chances are you already have some social media accounts. Don't just rush out and make more just to have them. Take this week to update and connect the ones you do have.

Have your social media manager answer these questions:

- Who has administrative access to these accounts? Should they? Update these on a monthly basis, not every member of staff and the board should have complete administrative rights.
- Are the hours/address/basic information accurate?
- Are the logos current?
- Do the links work?
- Is this platform conveying the information we want it to?
- Are we updating it regularly?
- Is there a newsletter signup on our social pages?

Month Two, Week Two: Donor Spotlight Scheduling

One great way to reach out to donors and volunteers is to publicly thank them for their support and service. Pick a day as your “spotlight day” and post a personalized acknowledgement. You can set this up in advance with Buffer or HootSuite.

Ideas include:

- Member Mondays
- Meet our newest member Jill!
- Thanks to Jack Frost at Snow Removal Inc for being a member for 10 years!
- Happy Birthday to our fantastic volunteer, Maggie!
- We are so glad the Johnson family made it to the Chalk Festival! They have been amazing donors for several years! Thanks for your support!
- Scout Troop #123 spent all-day Saturday cleaning kennels for us. Thank you so much for all the help guys!

Month Two: Week Three: Donor “Ads” Scheduling

It’s rude to always be asking for money all the time. So try to plan out when you want to ask. If you decide in advance when you want to push fundraising, you can find the balance between asking for money and promoting your mission.

Here are a few questions to routinely ask yourself and your staff:

- Is this really the project we need to raise money for?
- Are we asking at the right time?
- Is this how we should ask?
- Is this whom we should be asking?

Month Two, Week Four: Platform Evaluation Week

Now that your current social media platforms are all up-to-date, look into some more. Do you need be on any more? Do you have time for them? Do you understand how they work? Look into workshops, clinics, podcasts, or videos to learn more about how you can improve your social media communications.

Month Three: Newsletter/Donor Communication

Newsletters are THE way most nonprofits communicate with donors and volunteers. Because they are so popular, your newsletter writer should evaluate their program several times throughout the year to make sure that it is communicating effectively.

This month you and your staff will work on newsletter evaluation, mailing list evaluation, communication scheduling, and an overall cohesive communication evaluation.

Month Three, Week One: Newsletter Evaluation

In month one you assigned someone on your staff to be responsible for newsletters for your donors, volunteers, and members, but are these newsletters doing what they should be? You and the appropriate staff members should sit down and discuss the answers to these questions AT LEAST once every few months to make sure your newsletters are doing the most for your organization.

- Is your newsletter too long? Is each item too long (e.g. more than a 5-10 sentences)? Get the information across and link to more information on your website.
- Is it too plain? Are there pictures? Links to your social media pages, website, contact information, etc?
- Is it too busy? Are you advertising more than three things? If yes, pair it down a bit.
- Is it sending the right message? Are we always asking for something and never sharing our successes?
- Are we sending this just to send something? Is this good information?
- Are you segmenting your lists correctly? That is, do you have different lists for different audiences (e.g. members, donors, general, etc.)? Build out lists/mailings that are audience-focused, not telling one group things only another group would be interested in.

Month Three, Week Two: Mailing List Evaluation

All mailing lists (newsletters, email, physical mail, etc.) should be updated CONSTANTLY. You should not be sending anything to people who have moved, reported you as spam, requested to be taken off the list, or people who have expired memberships.

If you use Constant Contact or MailChimp, they automatically tell you if someone has unsubscribed. But you still need to go through and manually remove the individual from any other type of mailing list you have.

You should assign someone to check AT LEAST monthly, PREFERABLY WEEKLY to update for:

- New members, donors, or volunteers
- Expired memberships
- Any returned mail
- Delete any inaccurate email addresses
- Check for repeat or misspelled contacts
- Ask yourself, how are you/we growing our lists? Are signup boxes prominently featured on the website? Do we have signups on our social media? Are we making sure to add volunteers and donors to our lists (with their permission first, of course)?
- Ask yourself, what is the quality of our lists? Are there a lot of people on here that shouldn't be (and probably don't read what we say)? Have people asked to be on this list? Are we getting a lot of unsubscribes with every mailing?

Month Three, Week Three: Communication Scheduling

It is important to maintain a schedule. This makes it easier for you and your staff to plan out your schedules and your patrons to expect communications.

Once you pick a schedule, stick to it. Don't go overboard though. Once or twice a week on social media might be plenty, a monthly (or even quarterly) newsletter might be perfect. Think about how your frequency of your communication is based around the timing of actually having something worthwhile to say (and having your audience wanting to hear from you).

Here are a few ideas of how you might want to set up your schedule:

Option A: Join Us

Week 1: Fantastic Events Happening this Month
6th at 8pm Movie Night
15th at 10am Lecture on Super Pets
24th at 6pm Ice Cream and Dog Walking
30th at 2pm Books and Cat Cuddles

Week 2: Opportunities at Cats and Dogs
Volunteer Positions Available

Week 3: Memberships Support Our Mission
Monthly
Gifts
Yearly

Week 4: Classes are Coming
Kids
Gifts
Workshops
Teens
Adults

Option B: Event Focused

Week 1: Join us at Our Gala

Week 2: Shhh...It's Time for the Silent Movie Festival

Week 3: Signup for Our 13th Annual Golf Tourney

Week 4: Giving Fridays At Your Local Chipotle

Option C: Stories You've Created

Week 1: Little Timmy Just Built His First Robot

Week 2: 1,000,000 Crayons Donated to Local Schools

Month Three, Week Three (Continued)

Week 3: Thank You for Helping Us Provide Homes for 100 Iguanas

Week 4: 300 Quilts Tied on Saturday! Thanks for Helping!

Whatever schedule you choose, select the perfect medium (e.g. social media, newsletter, etc.) for the message.

Month Three, Week Four: Cohesive Communication Evaluation

At least three or four times a year, you should evaluate to make certain that all of your avenues of communication (newsletters, social media posts, emails, posters, etc.) are delivering a similar message to all of your donors. This can be especially difficult if you have more than one individual doing all of this communication. Check in with each other on occasion and answer these questions (then, use this information to do another 90-day or longer plan).

Items to consider:

- Is our message clear?
- Are we easy to contact?
- Are we asking too much of donors? Too little?
- Are we reaching out consistently? Are we scheduling contact in advance?
- Are we checking for grammatical or content errors?
- Are we updating our contact lists regularly enough?
- Are we including our donors in our successes?
- Are we, as a staff and board, all on the same page?
- Are we achieving our goals?
- What can we do better?