THE MARKETING 101 GUIDE FOR FUNDRAISERS

From your friends at Kindful

INTRODUCTION

Fundraisers are Marketers, too.

What I wish I knew about marketing when I was a fundraiser

By Kari Wilson, Marketing Director at Kindful

I spent 4 years working in fundraising at a large nationwide nonprofit. Starting on the major donor side, I researched potential donors for development directors. Eventually I switched to running our mass communications department (general donor communications).

At that nonprofit, we separated marketing and fundraising into two different categories. Marketing was in charge of social media, blogging, paid search, and our website; fundraising was in charge of communicating with our donors, asking them to give via mail, email, radio, telephone, and online giving. There was some obvious overlap there, but there are also commonly overlooked similarities.

The reality is that if you want your nonprofit to succeed, you need to treat marketing as fundraising and fundraising as marketing.

You can't separate the two. Yes, fundraising is typically referred to as sales. But I would propose that fundraising (on a mass scale – more than talking to donors one-on-one) is more "smarketing" – a combination of sales and marketing. Everything you do should be based on increasing donations to grow your nonprofit.

Using business-y things for nonprofit-y things

After working at this nonprofit, I got my masters degree in marketing. How I wish I knew the things I learned in business school when I was a fundraiser!

The biggest takeaway? **Successful nonprofits use marketing techniques of the business world to improve their fundraising.**

There's not much difference between creating a website that converts for donations and building a website that converts for leads. Think World Vision, charity:water, St. Jude's. These organizations are heavy hitters when it comes to bringing in online donations. Their websites convert extremely well – meaning someone who comes to their site is very likely to convert from a viewer to a donor.

Marketers also rely heavily on data to make decisions. The mantra of marketing is to hit people with the right message at the right time. The best way to accomplish that is to use their database. They look at revenue trends, the lifetime value of customers, and retention rates.

Sound familiar? It should!

Replace revenue and customers with giving and donors, and you're looking at the same graphs. As fundraisers, you should always be using your data to help you make marketing decisions.

In the remainder of this book, we're going to walk you through a 101 series on Marketing for Fundraisers. We'll share with you topics that for-profit businesses use to grow, but we'll translate all that business jargon into nonprofit lingo. It'll be like the Cliff's Notes of business-hacks. (Not that I would know what Cliff's Notes is…I always finished my reading 😉)

I know from experience that, as a fundraiser, you wear many different hats. You may not have the time or resources to research and stay up-to-date on the best marketing practices. At my nonprofit job, I didn't even know that I was supposed to be researching some of these things, let alone where to start.

That's why we've created this book – to give you all the resources you need to grow your organization. And we'll give you actual tips and how-to's so you can start using this information right away.

The first step? Looking at the "customer journey" and translating it into nonprofit terms.

THE DONOR JOURNEY ☛

CHAPTER 1

The Donor Journey

What it means for nonprofits

Understanding the donor journey

Any time you meet someone new, there are a few stages you go through. First, you're acquainted with the person, then you begin to learn more about them. Maybe you share a few similarities, and have similar experiences you laugh about.

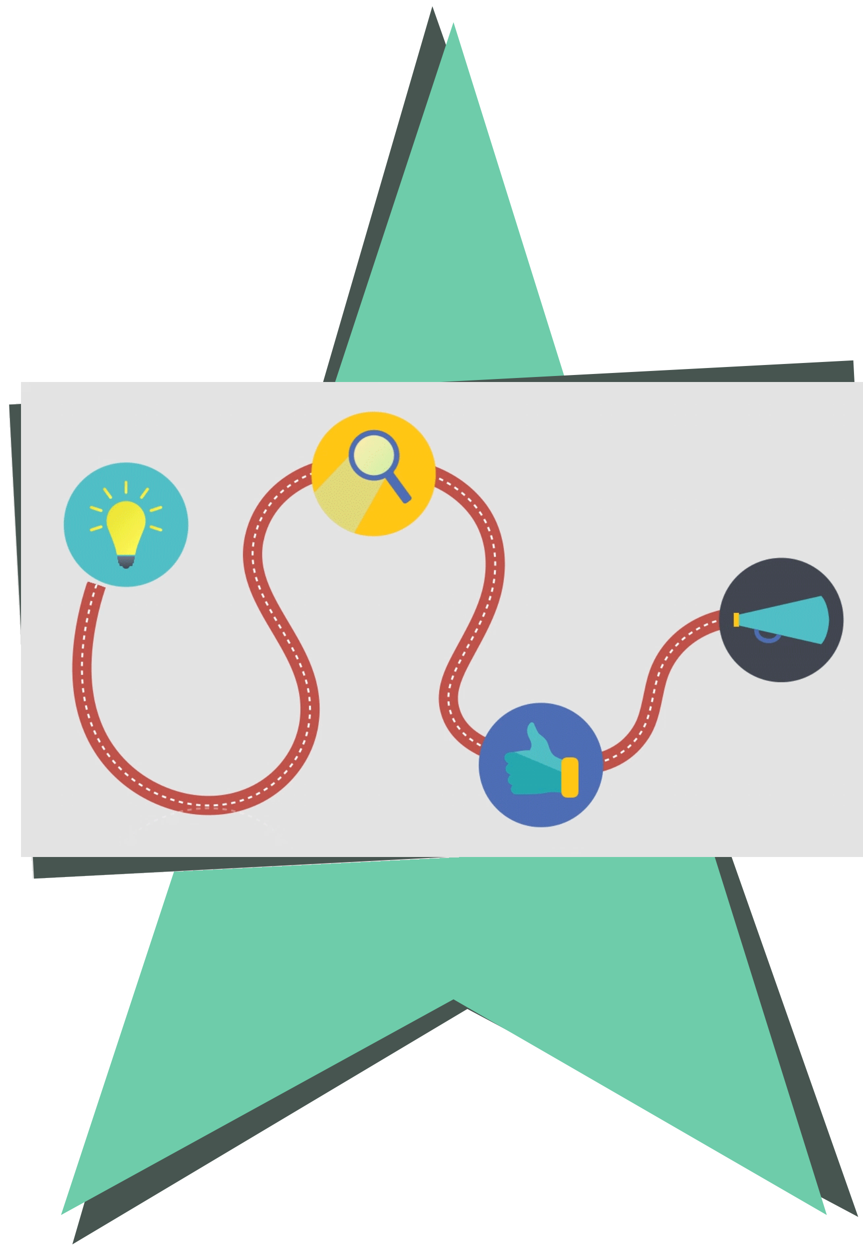
What's next? You become friends with them, and you're likely to introduce them to your other friends (if they're really cool).

A lot of really smart business folks have discovered a similar get-to-know-you process between customers and companies. It's called the customer journey.

And just as the for-profit world has a customer journey, the nonprofit world has a donor journey.

Your first response might be, "Why does this matter?" But if you're not thinking about a donor's interaction with your organization in this way, you may be losing sight of your donor as an actual person.

We preach the donor journey pretty heavily, as we've found it to be a key point to Persona Marketing. So we'll take it from here and do the defining, translating, and allegorizing to break down the customer journey into terms that mean more to you!



Awareness

For-profit
The buyer realizes they have a need.

Nonprofit
The donor realizes they want to give/help.

Awareness comes down to how much people know about your nonprofit. The more people who know you, the higher the chance of increasing your donor base.

The #1 best way to spread awareness? Be discoverable.

If someone wanted to give to your mission, but hasn't heard of your nonprofit, how would they find you? Unless your nonprofit's name is a searchable phrase, like "save the children", then you need a strategy around promoting awareness.

In marketing terms, there are two methods to build awareness: inbound and outbound (or push and pull).

Push (or outbound) marketing efforts include things like paid advertising, trade shows, and cold-calling. It's basically an interruption – people weren't asking to see your ad, it's just there.

Pull (or inbound) marketing is non-invasive. The goal is getting your nonprofit to show in search results when someone is looking for related causes or missions.

There are plenty of ways to promote awareness for your nonprofit.

Use personas* to determine who you should be talking to. Who are the ideal people that give to your organization? What are they like? For more information about personas check out our Persona-Based Marketing ebook.

Determine how you're driving people to places where they can learn about you.

- How can you use Facebook and Google Adwords to approach people who would be interested in your mission?
- What pieces of content are you posting that would be of interest to potential donors?
- Are you actively using your social media channels to give updates on your mission?

*a fictional representations of a group of donors that have similar interests

Research/Consideration

For-profit
The buyer defines their problem and researches options to solve it.

Nonprofit
The donor determines the cause they support and researches options on where to give.

Once someone finds your organization, the next stage is to introduce them to it. While there's plenty to inform these new people about, you should be analyzing the words you say, and the tools you use (or would like to use) to communicate.

Think about what you say to help them connect to your value and purpose. Get these people to emotionally connect and engage with your purpose using a variety of mediums. Consider other organizations the donor might consider giving money to in your community. Why should they give their money to you?

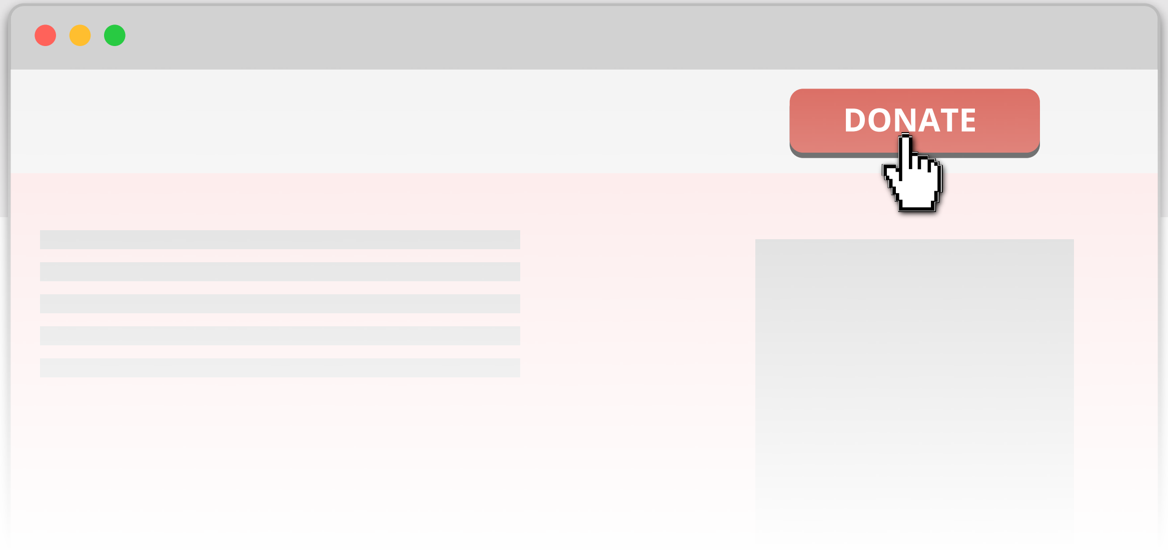
This is the stage where you give your donors everything they need to know about you. Since giving is such a personal (and sometimes emotional) interaction, it's important they really get to know your organization. The more they feel connected to your cause, the more likely they are to give.

What do people read before making a decision?

- **Success stories** – Firsthand accounts of how your nonprofit is impacting lives. Include photos and quotes that show impact.
- **Infographics** – This is just like it sounds: a graphic display of information. How many wells did you drill? Visually show your statistics in ways that are easy for donors to understand.
- **Annual Report** – This is a compilation of all the great work you've done over the past year. Include stats, stories, charts, graphs, or financials. Make it interesting and engaging so you keep people's attention.
- **Video** – Use video as much as you can. Studies show that people are 59% more likely to watch video than read posts, and 51% of marketers name video as the type of content with the best return on investment. These videos can be footage from the field, clips of beneficiaries saying, "Thank you," videos that show impact – get creative!
- **Testimonials from donors** – Here's where you get your donors to help recruit other donors. Have them explain why they give to you, and how it makes them feel.

All these ideas give potential donors reasons to give to your organization. In this stage of the journey, they want to find as much information as possible. It's your job to make it available to them.

Decision



For-profit
The buyer chooses a solution.

Nonprofit
The donor decides to give a donation.

Now that they're thoroughly in love with your organization, it's time for your admirer to give a donation. We just have one thing to say about that:

Make it easy for them to give!

Don't hide your donate buttons three pages into your website. Make it very accessible. **Our advice is to put a link to donate in the top right corner of every page of your site so donors always know where to find it.**

Think about other businesses you've visited online. 9 times out of 10 the top right corner of the site has a call-to-action – buy now, get a demo, sign up. As consumers, our eyes have been trained to go to the upper right corner when we're looking for important items. And the same is true for your donors. Make sure the most important action you want your donors to take is in the upper right corner.

You can also put donate buttons within your content – even in the middle of a great story you're telling. If a donor is compelled to give at that moment, why make them scroll or look elsewhere to find a "donate" button? The donation process should be as smooth as possible.

Evangelize

For-profit
The buyer tells their friends about their solution.

Nonprofit
The donor tells their friends about your cause.

This is the stage where you ask your loyal supporters to help you increase your brand awareness as well as recruit other prospective donors.

Ask them to share your posts on social media. Ask them to run a birthday campaign, inviting their friends to donate in lieu of gifts. Organize a race. There are creative ways for everyone to promote your nonprofit.

At this point, you should have gleaned this donor's email (from their online donation in the last step) and added them to your email list. By giving them regular updates and more giving opportunities, you can continue to engage that donor, reminding them to spread the word.

This stage is a prime place to make sure you're engaging your donors to cycle them through the donation process time after time.

Keep the journey going

By understanding the journey your donors are on, you can create the marketing and fundraising materials needed to take them through the cycle. From awareness and research to making their decision and sharing your cause with others, there are multiple touch points along the entire cycle that your nonprofit should be engaging in.

These content-driven touch points are what will keep donors moving along in their journey. Mapping out what their journey looks like with your organization (how they may have heard about you, your different donation opportunities, etc.) can inform what content someone might need to encounter at one stage to move them to the next.

Curious what all this crazed conversation around content is about? Next up: breaking down Content Marketing for nonprofits.

CHAPTER 2

Content Marketing

What it is, and how to do it as a nonprofit

What is Content Marketing for nonprofits?

According to the Content Marketing Institute, content marketing is defined as:

> **A strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.**

Since I had to read through that sentence multiple times to figure out what it said, let's break down those pieces real quick:

Marketing approach….creating and distributing – it's a mindset that results in both the creation and sharing of consumable material.

valuable, relevant, and consistent content – yes, anything you create should meet those three requirements.

to attract and retain a defined audience – it might be a good idea to define your audience first, but the goal is to attract these people and keep them engaged.

to drive profitable action – attracting them and retaining them should result in money-generating activity

Translate that into nonprofit lingo

Content marketing for nonprofits is creating content (blogs, guides, videos, social media, etc.) that not only engages with your donors, but also helps prospective donors discover your organization.

In the previous chapter we mentioned there are two types of marketing: push/outbound marketing and pull/inbound marketing. Content marketing is inbound marketing. You are creating content your prospective donors are already searching for and “pulling” them towards your organization’s solution.

Content marketing also allows you to establish what marketers call “thought leadership”. When someone is looking for something related to your cause or mission, thought leadership means your blogs, articles, or website will be sought after for its authority.

For example, if you’re fighting human trafficking and someone is looking for stats or news on human trafficking, they will ideally come to your site first. By bringing more people to your website, your brand will become more recognized, and some of those people will hopefully convert into donors.

So what elements make up content marketing? Let’s dive into some different pieces of content.

Compelling Content: blogs

Most everyone has a blog these days, and there's a reason for that. Not only is blogging a great way to keep your donors up to date with the happenings of your nonprofit, but it's also a great way to attract new and prospective donors.

There are different schools of thought on how often to post blogs and what they should contain. A good rule of thumb is to post content as consistently as you can, but you shouldn't post something just to post something. You want to make sure the content you produce is high quality so people see the value in it.

Here are some general blog tips:

LIsts are awesome.

Websites like Buzzfeed have shown us that we love reading lists. Top 10 places to see in the United States. 5 reasons why you should sell your VHS tapes. Lists are simple and straightforward, which is exactly what people are looking for: easy reads.

Include images.

This makes your blog post more interesting and engaging for readers. Place images throughout your blog that are relevant to your topic as well as include an image at the top. This may even mean you'll have to write less, as they're worth at least 1,000 words.

Use links.

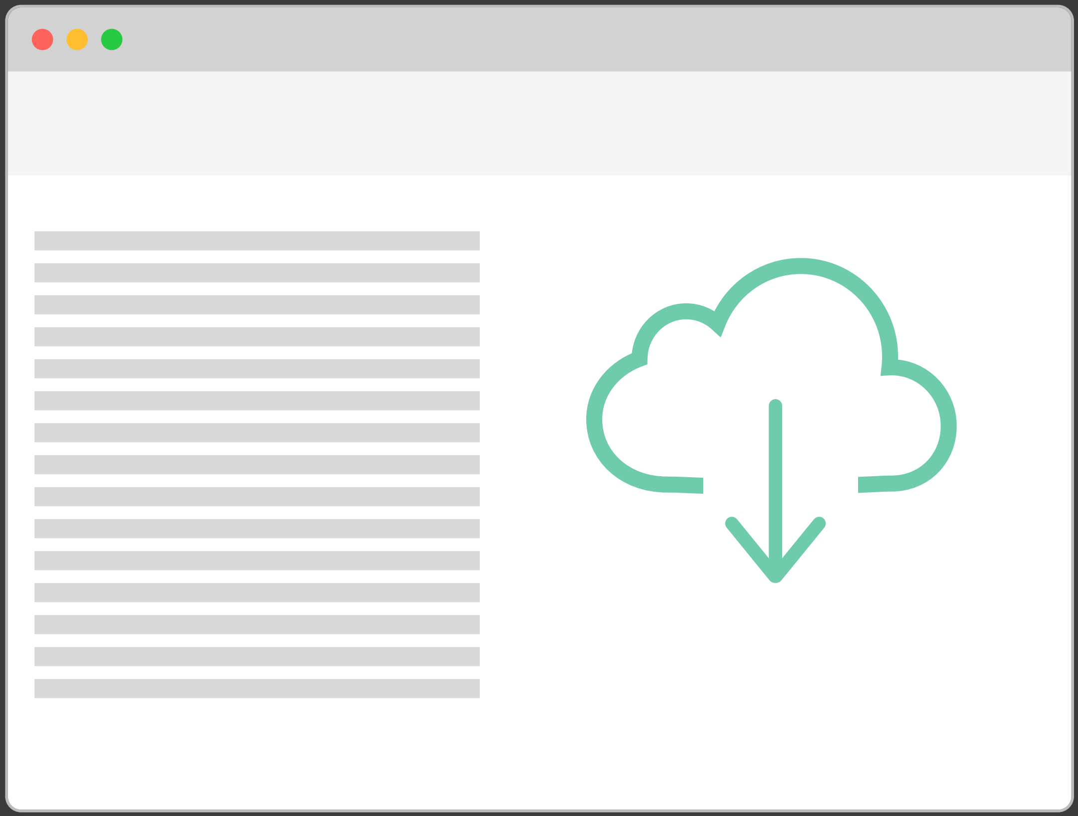
One way to help your blog posts get found on search engines (like Google) is to link to credible sources outside your website. Another is linking to your other blog posts. Outside source links could be a website you used to find a statistic, or the original website of a quote you are using. Linking to other posts on your blog gives the reader additional options to keep reading, and keeps them on your blog longer, gaining more exposure to your nonprofit.

Compelling Content: downloadable content

Another key aspect of content marketing is creating downloadable content. This is content that is a little more in-depth on one topic (like an ebook or guide) that people would be willing to give up their contact info in order to download.

Once you have their contact info, you can start sending them information about your mission. Sending them content – whether that's your monthly newsletter or an introductory email series – acquaints them your mission and background, and invites them to engage deeper.

Did your founder write a short book or essay that people would be interested in reading? Is your nonprofit an expert on a certain topic? Then compile those ideas into an ebook! You can also repurpose a blog series you've created and make it into a downloadable ebook. Anything that shows value enough for people to give you their name, email, and address.



Compelling Content: social media

When it comes to the donor journey, social media can be sprinkled throughout the entire thing. Social media is a great way to not only spread awareness about your organization, but also create evangelists for your organization. Since we've written a lot about social media in the past, we'll focus on creating evangelists in this section. (Check out our Twitter Tutorial to learn how you can set up an account and learn some basic tips.)

Create social media posts that are most likely to shared by your followers. This can include a powerful image, video, statistic, piece of content, etc. A great place to start is to go through your social media posts and see what people have responded to in the past. Are there certain posts that people share or like more than others? Create more of those! You don't have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to creating shareable social posts.

Play up your hashtag game. Create hashtags around your cause and start getting your advocates to use and promote it. Hashtags can be used across all social media platforms and are a great to spread awareness about your cause. Try challenging your donors to do something – we all know how successful the Ice Bucket Challenge was. And while that challenge took on a life of it's own, there are a lot of elements from that campaign that you can apply to your audience.

Don't forget to give your donors the opportunity to promote your mission. This includes things like promoting birthday campaigns (like charity:water), gifts in honor or in memory of someone, etc. Think of things that would be compelling for your donors to share and then test it.

This Is Great - Where Do I Start?

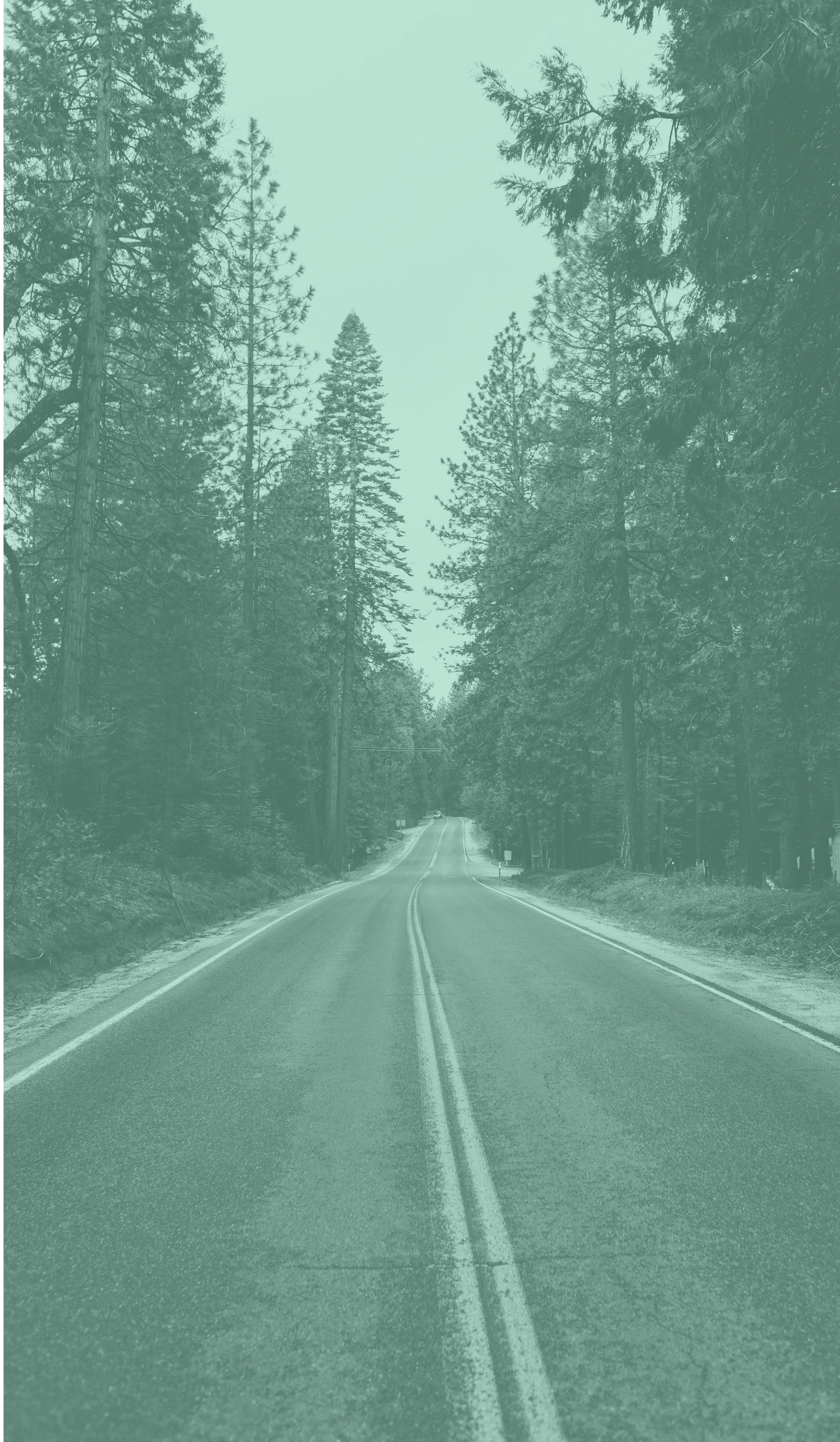
Yes, we know we just threw a ton of different content ideas at you. It can feel overwhelming to create all of it! The best way to get started is to think through your donor journey.

Walk through your donor journey and figure out what topics would be the most helpful to your supporters or prospective supporters at each stage. (Generally, blogs and guides are more beneficial at the earlier stages of the donor journey, while social media can be more effective for evangelizing.)

Next, start mapping out your content marketing. Remember, your donors are going on a journey. Make sure the order of your content makes sense. You wouldn't want to give your prospects an extremely in-depth white paper about something that only your current donors would understand.

To help you out, we've created a Donor Journey Map worksheet that you can fill in with all your different pieces of content.

Print that puppy, grab your team and a whiteboard, and start brainstorming content ideas!



CHAPTER 3

Landing Pages, Donation Pages, and Their Differences

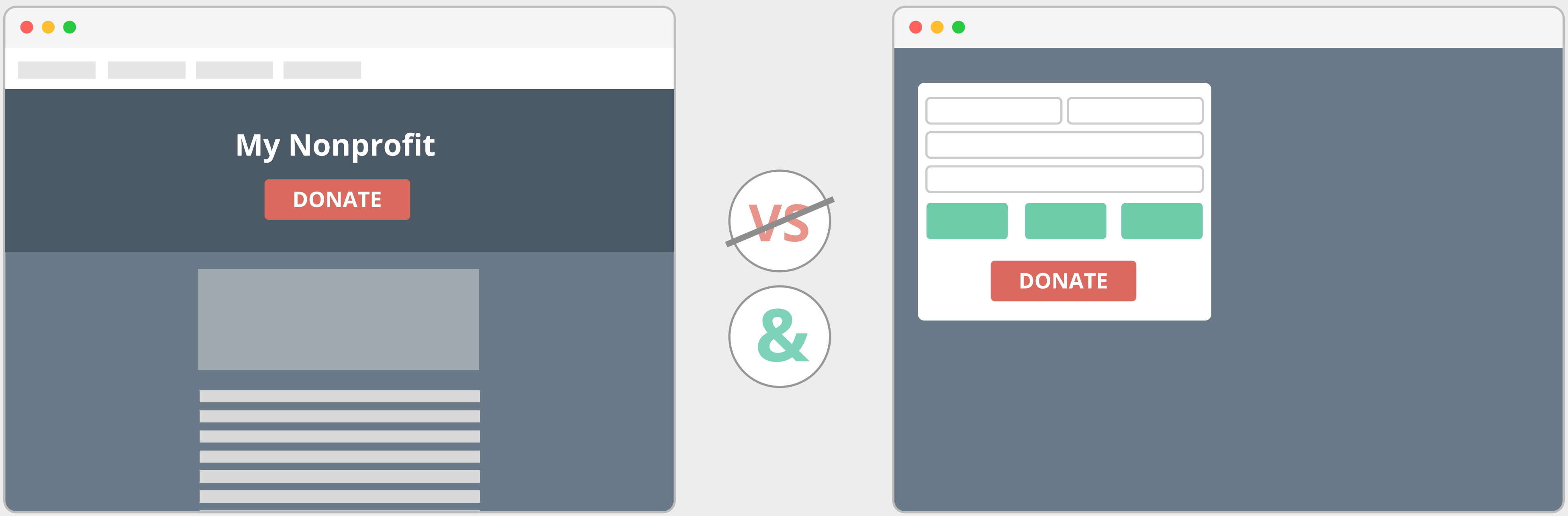
Both Landing Pages and Donation Pages Are Best

With online giving steadily increasing, it's now more important than ever to get your online ducks in a row. That means websites, donate buttons, video stories, and yes – donation pages.

Getting this down is pivotal to increasing online fundraising. Donors are looking for very specific information and opportunities. The better you can display everything for them, the easier it will be for them to participate.

While many of us have never even heard of a "landing page" before, we can guarantee that everyone on the internet these days has experienced a landing page.

If you're in the never-heard-of-it camp, no worries. We'll explain what a landing page is, how it's different than a donation page, and best practices for using both.



What is a landing page?

A landing page is a designated web page that a donor can “land on” from a specific campaign. This can include clicking on a paid search ad in Google, or a link in your emails. The main idea is that clicking on a link will take someone to this specific page.

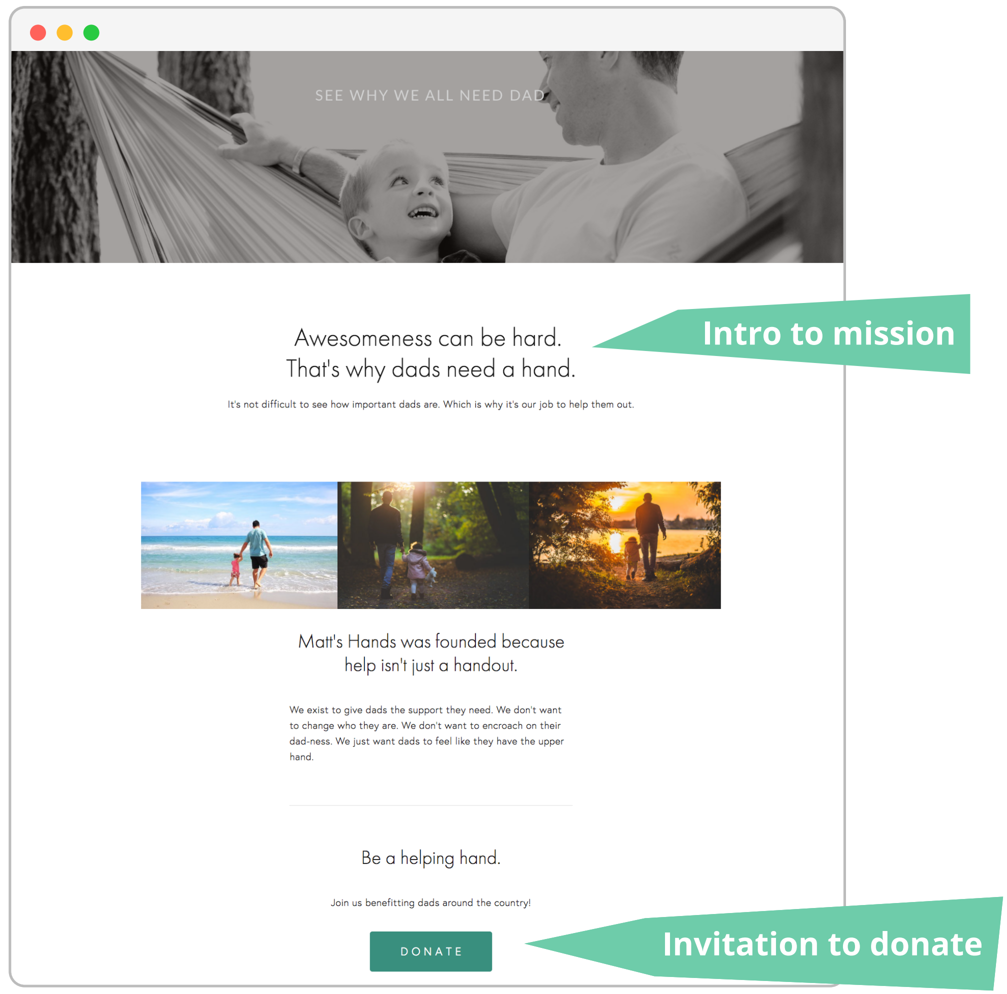
A landing page is a place where you include stories, photos and videos, your offer, and your call to action – which should be “donate” 90% of the time.

These landing pages are specific to a campaign. While they can include some background information about your nonprofit, their main focus should be on what you want the donor to do (AKA your call-to-action).

Make sure that all the calls-to-action relate to the campaign. If you have a landing page for your capital campaign, all your buttons should correspond to capital campaign donating. If your landing page is to inspire sign ups for an event, then make sure all the buttons go toward that event’s signup.

The reason for this is two-fold. One, it gives your donors a seamless experience. They don’t want to be searching all over your page to figure out what they came there to do. And two, it’s much easier for your nonprofit to track how each campaign is doing in your database.

Here’s a quick example:



What is a donation page?

A donation page is a separate page your donors go to after they click on a donate button within your landing page. It's important that these two pages match in design and branding so your donor knows they're still on the same site. This page needs very little information. If your landing page was done correctly, they should have all the information they concerning why they're giving to your nonprofit. There should be very few distractions.

The key things your donation page needs are

1) the offer,
2) the impact the gift will have, and
3) the suggested ask amounts.

For example, "Your gift of $25 will provide a child with a book this Christmas."

You can also make the gift amounts dynamic based on their previous giving. Let's say someone last gave $50 to your organization. It wouldn't make sense for you to ask them for a $5 donation, but it would make sense to ask them for a $50-$75 donation.

TIP:

To do this, create groups in your database based on gift range. Decide how you'd like to break up your ask amounts (low, medium, high) and then create donation pages with those gift amounts pre-populated. Then, you can send emails with targeted ask amounts related to that group's previous giving. E.g. Send an email to high amount donors, and link the button in the email to a donation page with high amounts suggested.

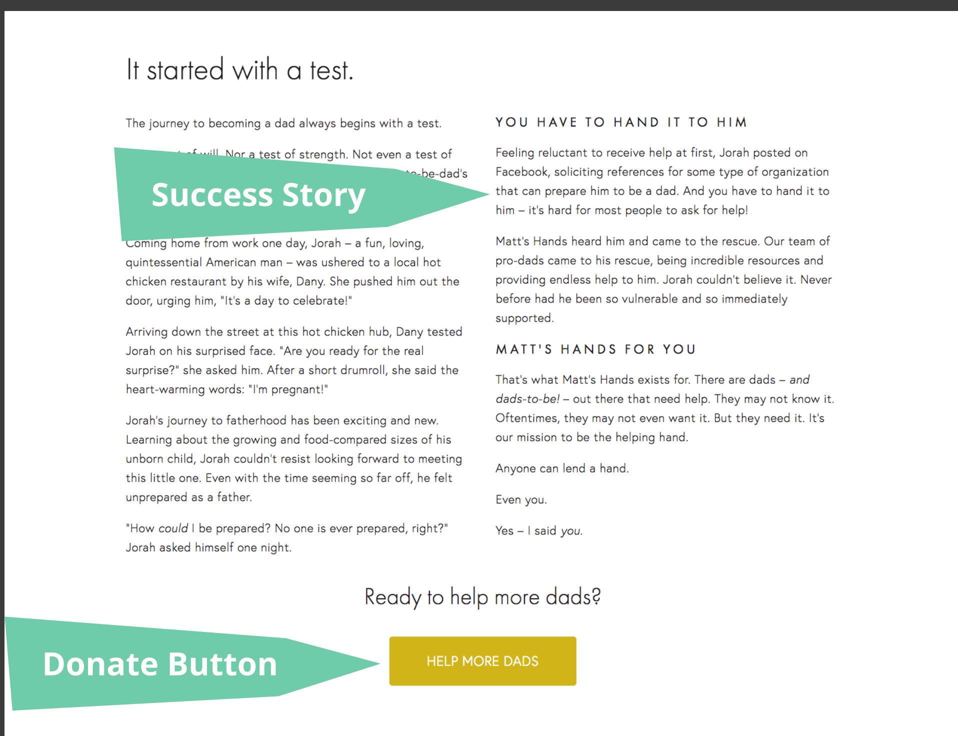
Can landing pages and donation pages ever be the same?

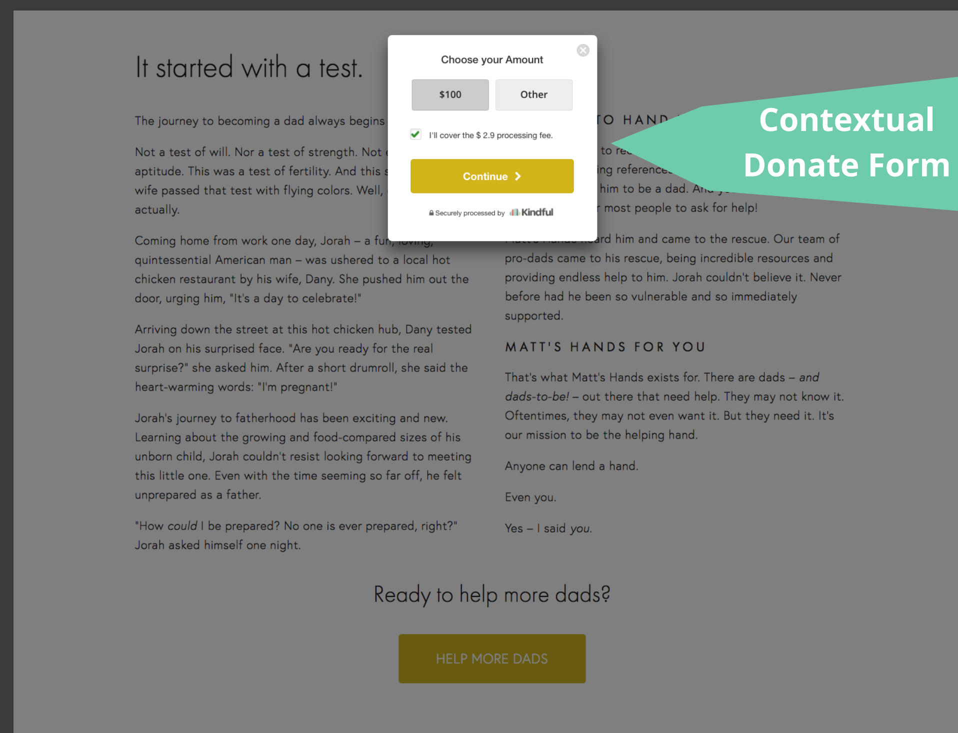
Yes! A landing page can become a donation page when the donor doesn't have to leave the page to make a donation.

Potential donors want to learn as much as they can about your organization before making a donation. Give them all the information they need and give them a place to donate.

Taking a step further, you can place donate buttons strategically around your landing page that pop up right on the page, keeping the donor on your site.

If you have a powerful video testimony from someone who has been impacted, put a donate button right after their story. This way when donors feel compelled to give, the option is right there.





Three tips for success

While there are great tips out there to create landing pages, we have a few steps for you to move forward and get started.

#1

First, take inventory of the pages you already have on your website. Some of them might be great landing pages already, and just need to be supplemented with some donate buttons or specifically placed links to donation pages.

#2

Second, try making your own landing page. Think about which campaign you want to direct people toward, and build messaging on this page around that goal. Think about everything someone would want to know about before giving. Put yourself in their shoes to think about where they may feel inspired to click a donate button.

#3

Finally, test out a handful of methods! We'll dive deep into testing in the next chapter, but if you make a landing page that doesn't inspire donations, try redesigning it. If you place 3 donate buttons throughout the website, but people only click on 1 of them, try changing the placement of the other 2. Think through statistics you see and try improving the weak ones to get more donations!

Still not sure where to start? Make sure your donation page is up to snuff.

CHAPTER 4

A|B Testing

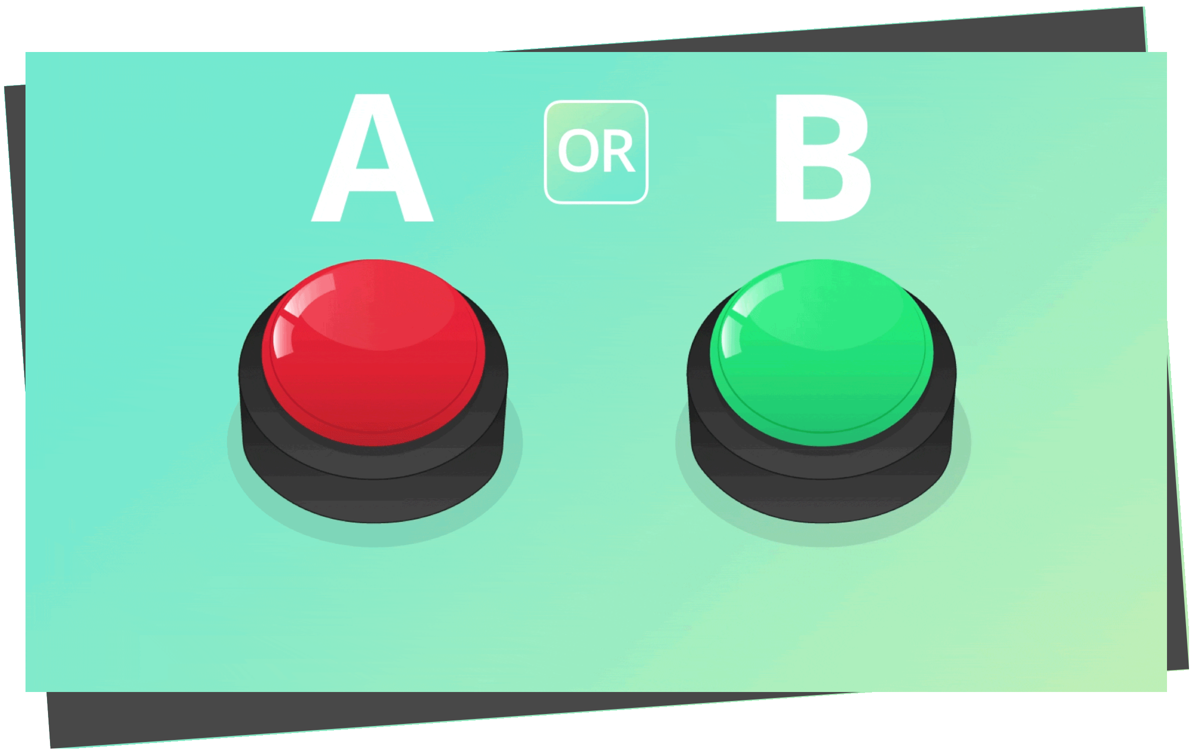
Why you should test everything

Improve your messaging with A|B testing

While the concept of A|B testing hasn't been around for ages, the process has proven itself time and time again. A|B testing can dramatically improve your messaging, as it places the behaviors of your audience right in your lap.

Sound too good to be true? It takes a bit of work to get to these answers, but we'll pave the way to smooth testing. Answers like never before will be at your fingertips.

Let's get testin'!



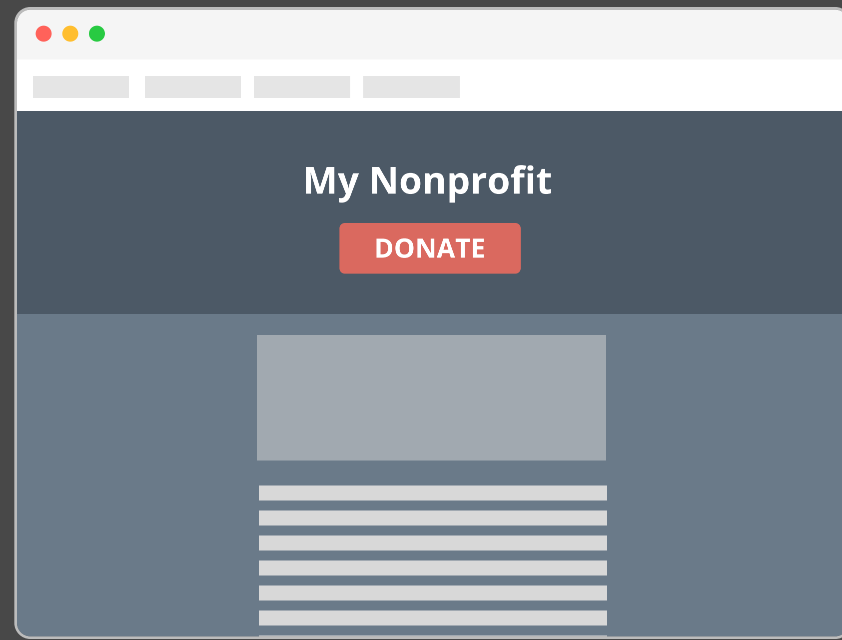
What is A|B testing?

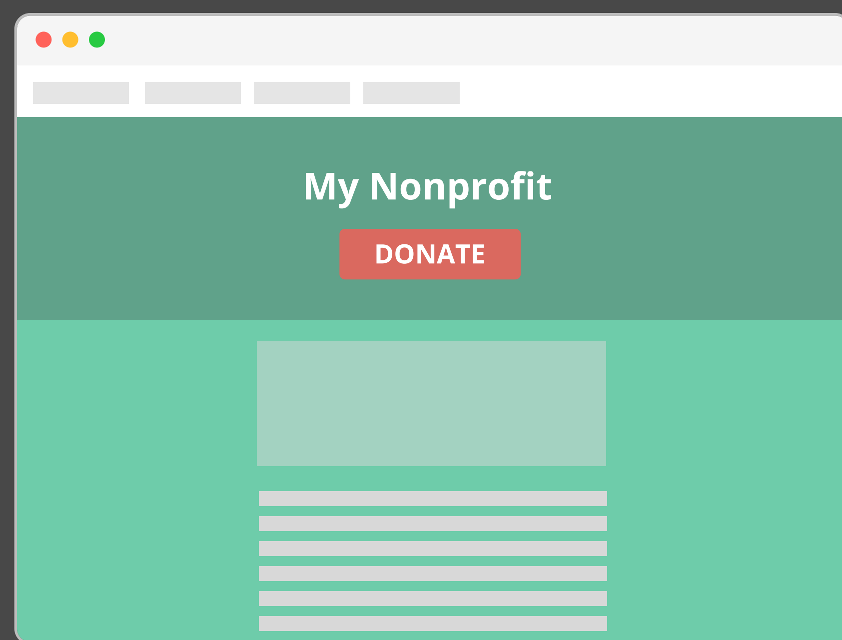
A|B testing is the process of comparing two versions of something to see which one performs better.

This process takes a very calculated approach toward improving your results. Why does all that technical, business-y stuff matter? **Because increasing results means increasing donations!**

You can use A|B testing on anything – your website, direct mail appeals, emails, landing pages – you name it, you can test it.

You should be doing some sort of test in everything you send out. It can be as simple as a subject line in an email, or as complicated as a new direct mail package. Make sure you include a line in your fundraising budget for testing new ideas. *More on cost toward the bottom of this chapter.*





Benefits of testing

Testing allows you to try new things in a low-risk environment. Many organizations wonder if redesigning their emails would increase donations, but are too afraid of risking revenue. This should be a huge indicator for you to try testing!

An A|B test doesn't necessarily mean you need to split your audience 50|50. If you have enough people, you can split your test 70|30 or 60|40 if you want to be conservative with your testing. Numbers are the key – you need to have enough people in your test group to get a statistically significant result.

Testing also shows you what doesn't work with your donors. Every test you run is a learning opportunity for your fundraising team, so there are no downsides to testing!

I'm Convinced, Now What?

Not sure where to start?

First, make a list of all the different fundraising appeals you send out in a year. Then, you and your team can brainstorm test ideas. Think of things you've always wanted to try, but never got around to.

Finally, determine how aggressive you'll be with your testing. Will it be 50|50 or 80|20? Once you've decided your proportions, you can create lists in your database so you can easily track the results.

Make sure you account for the costs involved. There are some great – and fairly inexpensive –tools out there to get started down the path of testing. We use Optimizely to test new ideas on our website, and there's also Google Optimize. Eager to test images, subjects, or messaging in emails? If you're using MailChimp, Emma, or Constant Contact, you can begin testing your subject lines with each of those services.

We know that sometimes it can be challenging to come up with test ideas on your own. Don't worry, we've got you covered. We created a Nonprofit A|B Testing Checklist to help jump start your brainstorming session. You can print that checklist out and get to testin'!

CHAPTER 5

Marketing Emails

How to make them more successful

5 Steps to Creating a Powerful Donor Email

The final piece to this nonprofit marketing book brings you the power of email. We've finally arrived at the end, and we're going to combine all of those topics into one heady topic: emails.

It's difficult to grow without a powerful email vision in your portfolio. Email continues to prove its usefulness, and meets your donors where they're headed: the digital world.

This chapter will attempt to provide you with 5 steps to creating a powerful email. This could reach your donor anywhere on their journey. Maybe you send an email welcome series to someone who downloaded some content of yours. Perhaps you direct people to a landing page from a content email. Or maybe you've done all that, and now you're ready to test out some new suggestions in making your subject lines or email content better.

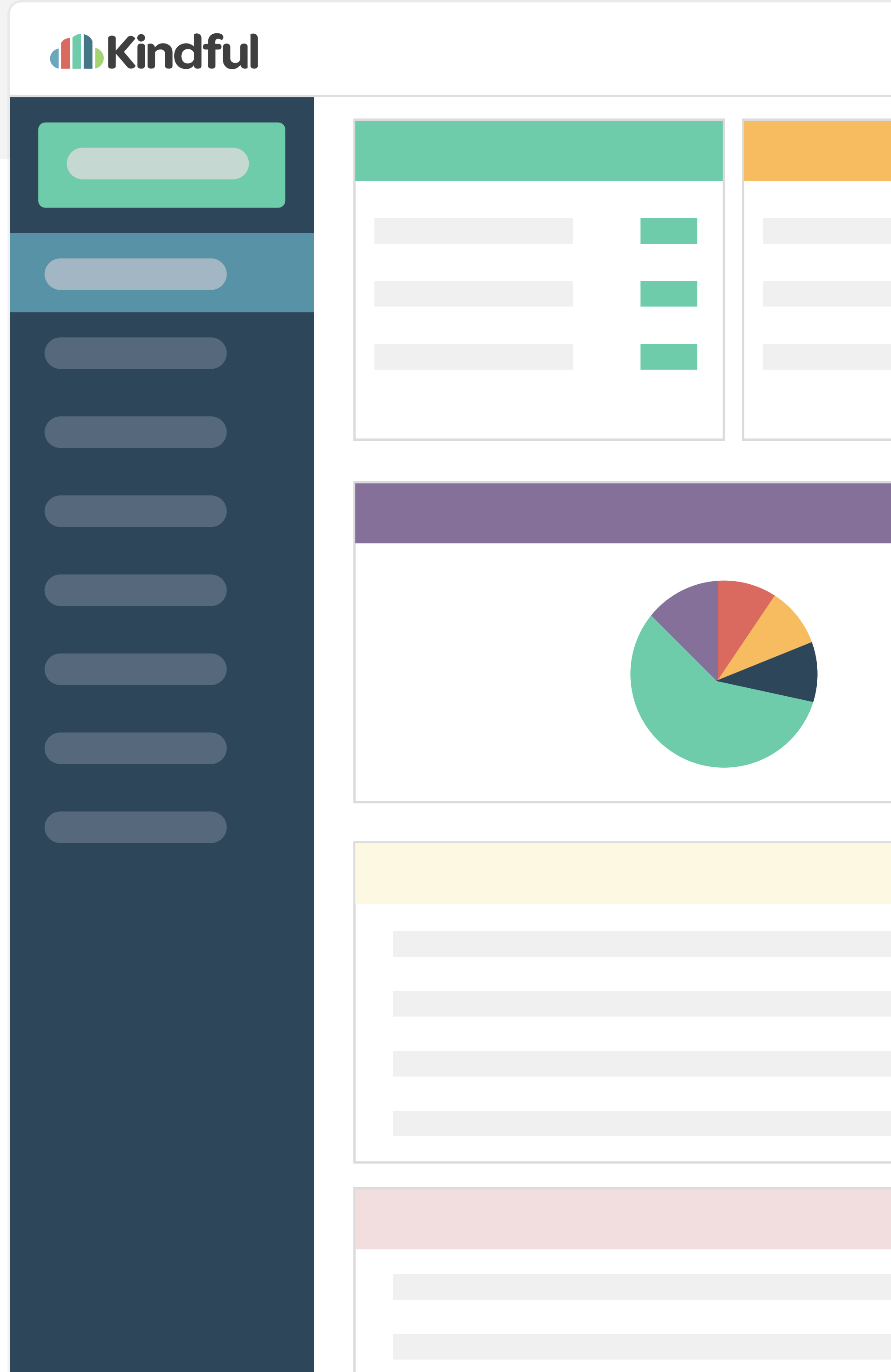
Our 5 steps provide great tips for any email campaign you're getting ready to send!

Step 1: Organize your data

Getting all donor data organized into a nonprofit CRM solution is essential, especially if you're reaching out to 100 people or more. It's simply too much to handle from scratch. Once all your data is in one place you can simply segment your donors in a way that will help you spot specific groups like:

- Prospective donors
- One-time donors
- Recurring donors
- Location / demographics

It will be important to approach each of these groups with a different kind of message in your marketing email. If you have thousands of people to organize, you may want to subdivide these groups even further, getting more specific. The more targeted and specific, the better your responses will be!



Step 2: Write like a person, not an organization

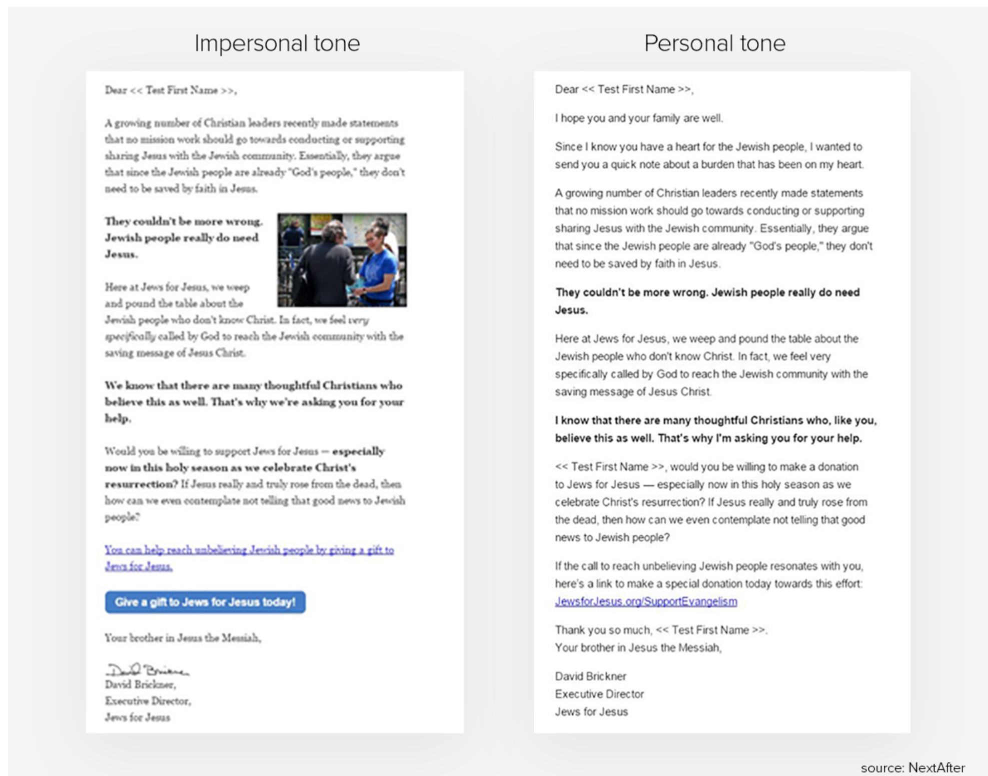
Donations are not sales. It's true that trust can be built with organizations, which can in turn lead to sales. Yet researchers have found the opposite when it comes to nonprofits. The kind researchers over at NextAfter have found that donors want real relationships with real people (or at least virtually-real people). The more organization-centric it is, the less likely people will donate.

So, how do you make a nonprofit email sound like a person? Focus on relationship building.

1. Relationships create trust.
Trust is what needs to exist for someone to give. If they don't trust the nonprofit or the person, then how can they trust where their donation will go? Relationships are built when the tone, person, and story sound believable.

On the right is an example of how changing copy from an impersonal, new-telling voice to a personal, friendly voice improved click-through and donation conversion.

2. Start the relationship with subject and sender
This is a real thing: a more personal subject and sender raises open rates. Changing the sender from the org name to a person's name showed a 6% increase in opens in this study. Have you gotten the message yet? Make it personal!



Impersonal tone

Dear << Test First Name >>,

A growing number of Christian leaders recently made statements that no mission work should go towards conducting or supporting sharing Jesus with the Jewish community. Essentially, they argue that since the Jewish people are already "God's people," they don't need to be saved by faith in Jesus.

They couldn't be more wrong. Jewish people really do need Jesus.

Here at Jews for Jesus, we weep and pound the table about the Jewish people who don't know Christ. In fact, we feel *very specifically* called by God to reach the Jewish community with the saving message of Jesus Christ.

We know that there are many thoughtful Christians who believe this as well. That's why we're asking you for your help.

Would you be willing to support Jews for Jesus — **especially now in this holy season as we celebrate Christ's resurrection?** If Jesus really and truly rose from the dead, then how can we even contemplate not telling that good news to Jewish people?

You can help reach unbelieving Jewish people by giving a gift to Jews for Jesus.

Give a gift to Jews for Jesus today!

Your brother in Jesus the Messiah,

David Brickner,
Executive Director,
Jews for Jesus

Personal tone

Dear << Test First Name >>,

I hope you and your family are well.

Since I know you have a heart for the Jewish people, I wanted to send you a quick note about a burden that has been on my heart.

A growing number of Christian leaders recently made statements that no mission work should go towards conducting or supporting sharing Jesus with the Jewish community. Essentially, they argue that since the Jewish people are already "God's people," they don't need to be saved by faith in Jesus.

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I know that there are many thoughtful Christians who, like you, believe this as well. That's why I'm asking you for your help.

<< Test First Name >>, would you be willing to make a donation to Jews for Jesus — especially now in this holy season as we celebrate Christ's resurrection? If Jesus really and truly rose from the dead, then how can we even contemplate not telling that good news to Jewish people?

If the call to reach unbelieving Jewish people resonates with you, here's a link to make a special donation today towards this effort: JewsforJesus.org/SupportEvangelism

Thank you so much, << Test First Name >>.
Your brother in Jesus the Messiah,

David Brickner
Executive Director
Jews for Jesus

source: NextAfter

Step 3: Write a catchy subject line

According to a study done by MailChimp, the average nonprofit email open rate is 24.98%. That may seem low, but when you think about it, most people have more email than they have time for!

This is what makes an email subject line so important. It may be the only part of your email a potential donor reads – so you need to make it impactful.

The best subject lines are direct (no flowery language), short (readable on your smartphone), and customized to your audience (e.g. adding information such as donor location).

You can also test things like adding personalization (their first name) or adding an emoji to your subject lines.

Step 4: Include a call-to-action

Once you have their attention with your catchy subject line, and you've built their trust, you need to determine what action you want your donors to take. Do you want them to donate? Volunteer? Attend an event?

Including a "call-to-action" within your email is critical for its success.

A "call-to-action" (or a "CTA") can be a button or link at the end of your email that gets the reader to take a next action. Make these buttons in a contrasting color from the rest of your email so they stand out. The best CTAs include very direct wording, like "Donate Now" or "Sign Up". You want your donors to clearly know how they should respond to your email.

TIP:

Test the location and quantity of your call-to-action buttons. Try placing one in the middle of you email after a compelling story. Try placing one in the upper right corner, in addition to below the signature. See what placement and quantity works best for your audience.

What then? Keep testing!

DOWNLOAD OUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO TESTING

Step 5: Always know the why

Like we said earlier in this blog, people have more email than they have time for. This fact alone means it's important for your organization to be intentional when contacting donors. No one likes spam mail, so don't send spammy emails!

Your emails should leave your donors feeling excited about your organization and mission. Examples of this include success stories (demonstrating the impact of your organization), upcoming events (that your donors could attend), or major organizational changes (your nonprofit just added a new board member or established a new partnership).

Effective nonprofit emails can have a huge impact on revenue for your organization. A study in the UK confirmed the need for the tech-facelift, showing that the return on investment for emails is $38 to every $1 spent.

If you feel like you've been spinning your wheels, sending emails without any response or uptick in donations, fear not! By following these steps, you'll be cranking out high-performing emails in no time.

SUMMARY

3 Easy Steps

We've covered a lot in this book! There's a lot to take in. Usually after I'm finished reading something like this, I just sit back and think, "Well now what?"

Let us answer that for you.

Step 1: Compile your notes

Scroll back through the earlier chapters. Recollect your thoughts about the Donor Journey. Collect any applicable notes about the different stages, and what you think that might look like for your specific donors.

Think about the Content Marketing section. Write down any and all ideas that may have come to mind about content your organization could be creating. Don't lose those thought nuggets!

Can you define what a landing page is? Can you explain the differences between a landing page and a donation page?

Look back through all the chapters and make sure you collect highlights, thoughts that were sparked, and tidbits that you may not have thought of before. These are going to be vital in the next stage, and for the rest of your fundraising career!

Step 2: Map it out

When you downloaded this ebook,you also received the links to two other pieces of content. One that will be really helpful in the next step is the Donor Journey Worksheet.

Expanding on your ideas formed from this book, take the worksheet and fill it out with your co-workers. You could even draw the map up on a white board and throw ideas on the wall (might be helpful if you have a lot of ideas!).

The basis of this second step is to discover where your donor journey goes, and how to meet your donors there. You should be thinking about tons of content, but also how to send them emails, and what types of landing or donation pages you should be directing them to. Brainstorm all the different pieces you need to accelerate your donor journey.

SUMMARY

Step 3: Publish, test, repeat

After you've ironed out all your marketing ideas (content, emails, connection points) in Step 2, put them in play! Crank those materials out as quick as you can and get them implemented in your donor journey.

The big catch: this isn't a set-it-and-forget-it scenario. Let these materials run for awhile, and then examine the results. What part of the process are your donors disengaging in? Do you see clicks drop on a certain type of content, or a specific part of the journey?

This brings us back to our chapter on A|B testing. As wonderful as it sounds to be able to make a ton of content and then just sit back and watch the donations roll in...that's not quite how it works.

You're going to try stuff. And not all that stuff is going to work perfectly. And that's great! That gives you the details you need to know what your donors don't like. Gather that info, change that piece, and give it another shot.