



**COMMUNITY BOOST**

# **THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO YEAR-END FUNDRAISING 2021**

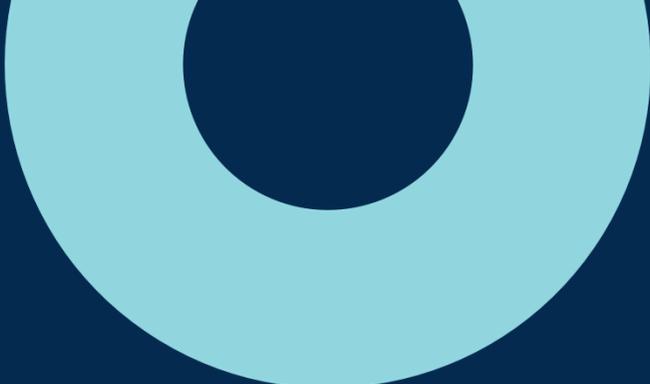
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**HOW TO EFFECTIVELY PLAN & LAUNCH YOUR  
NONPROFIT'S YEAR-END CAMPAIGN**

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**“If you want the end result, focus on the future. If you want to stay stuck where you are, keep focusing on the past.”**

**- Tim Grover**

# Introduction

What does your organization struggle with when it comes to year-end fundraising? Is it hard to stand out with quality creative and a [compelling campaign story](#)? Do you have trouble [acquiring new donors](#)? The answers to these questions should influence your strategy for year-end fundraising, help decide which marketing tools would be best for your organization, and provide you with a good start to your year-end launch strategy.

After working with over 1,000 nonprofits directly to date, Community Boost has developed our best tips for developing and maintaining a tailored year-end campaign for your nonprofit in 2021. Let's take what we've learned from this year and end 2021 on a positive note!

Here's what we found...



# 2021 Considerations

## COVID Recovery, Response, and Continuation

Ultimately we know there is less disposable income by people losing jobs or being excited to finally spend on travel or seeing family post COVID.

## Nonprofit Support Isolated to Certain Cause Areas

There has been a focus on individual causes like global health, climate change, disaster response, DEI, etc. Your donors are not YOUR donors. This is why focusing in on retaining and giving donors a reason to choose your cause.

## Data Tracking Changes - Learn more about the iOS 14 update [here](#)

These changes impact digital marketing approach and data visibility of results. There are many things we can do to counteract this change but we can not rely on data from last year and expect that it will work for this year's strategy as well

# 2021 Approach

We have data on which days we saw the most engagement with our digital advertising. This will be **crucial** to help us decide which days we want to scale our spend for 2021.

We know that the majority of our impressions and conversions came from mobile campaigns. We will be **doubling down** on mobile-only campaigns for year-end.

We used Fundraise Up to help us better track and segment out the types of donors coming to site. We saw those that gave during Giving Tuesday (1-time donors) often became recurring givers during year-end through **tailored Facebook advertising**. This is easy to do with Facebook events and something we want to **capitalize** on this year.

We found that early top of funnel campaigns were helpful for remarketing traffic. Advertisers will need to rely on **video engagement campaigns** this year.



# Individualizing Your Strategy

*Answer these questions in your notes...*

**What are 2-3 things that most impacted your 2020 Year End?**

ex. Virtual Events / Cancelled Events, Disposable Income, Election Year

**What are your nonprofit's fundraising pain points and main challenges when it comes to Year End?**

ex. Small existing supporter base, understanding your mission, competing with other nonprofits



# 7 Tips to Surpass Goal and Finish Strong

Now that we have identified the “problem(s)”, how can you customize your strategy for success?

## 1. Use Past Wins as a Roadmap to Success



What was your average gift amount last year?

What was the average cost per donor (on the advertising front)?

What campaigns raised the most money?

What were the most popular campaigns with each donor segment?

Were the campaigns run through your website or a separate fundraising page? What were the pros and cons of both?

Which channels were the highest converting (email, direct mail, paid social, Google Ad Grant, etc.)?

## 2. Engage with Donors Well Before Year-End

The earlier the better. Because of Giving Tuesday and YE saturation, it is more important than ever to warm up different audiences to year-end appeals ahead of time. This help keep donors informed, engaged with the mission, and expecting your advertisements.

Having multiple touchpoints to ensure supporters feel involved year-round is 

Also, remember that donor stewardship isn't one-size-fits-all. You should consider a personalized approach for your outreach strategy based on each donor segment (top givers, recurring givers, new donor, volunteers).

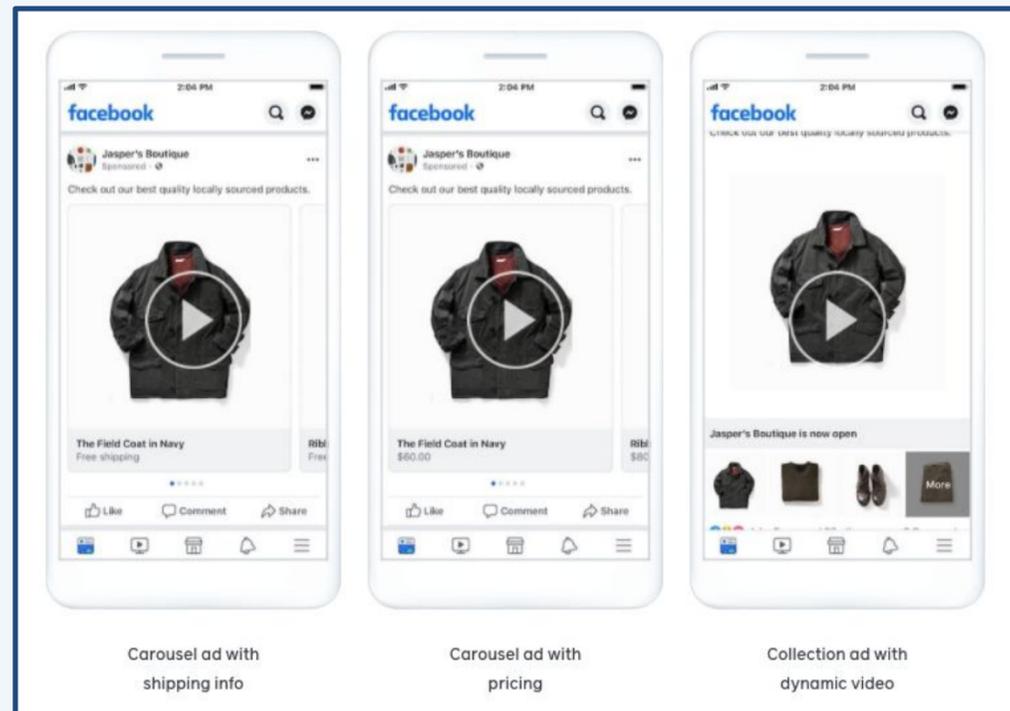
Learn How to Launch and Scale a Recurring Giving Program with our free [webinar](#).



### 3. Use Segmentation and Personalization

**Craft a Good Message:** Your supporters should feel like you're in their shoes. The best performing campaigns stand out by having one message that is concrete and specific. Ensure that your campaign messaging is consistent across channels.

*Learn more about how to develop a compelling campaign story [here](#).*



**Segment Your Audience:** You need to be dividing your donors into groups based on their behaviors or traits. "People don't ever mind being interrupted if the ad's message is interesting to them." Focus on delivering timely and relevant messaging. Segmenting by visitor traffic is one way to do this.

**Personalize the Appeal:** Use your existing data to make your appeal sound like it was written just for that individual. By leveraging machine learning to dynamically select ad formats, creative, and copy, we can improve user experience by meeting people where they're at. This is available for Google and Facebook advertising.

### 4. Measure What Matters: Let Data Be the Center of Your Strategy

**Focus on the right metrics:** Set yourself up for success by identifying clear metrics that you want to keep an eye on before launching a campaign.

**Value your best supporters:** Instead of measuring transactions alone, model the lifetime value you derive from your supporters.

**Attribute value across the journey:** To find out what's working in your marketing and what's not, identify the role of each touchpoint along the customer's journey through abandonment rates and page drop-off.



**Prove marketing impact:** Use controlled experimentation to understand what happened only because of a given marketing spend change (and would not have happened without it). Always be testing.

Collectively, these points can improve campaign effectiveness, help you get the credit you deserve for your programs and, most importantly, ensure a better return on investment for all of your marketing.

## Key Metrics:

**Fundraising:** Number of gifts, average donor amount, average cost per donor, donor retention rate, total funds raised. If using advertising tools, add in donor data!

**Marketing:** Conversion rate, ROAS, ROI, landing page views, bounce-rate, cost per conversion, frequency.

**Project or program:** Number of beneficiaries served, beneficiary satisfaction rate, number of hours per project.

**Opportunities** — These suggestions can help your page load faster. They don't directly affect the Performance score.

Opportunity	Estimated Savings
▲ Reduce unused JavaScript	7.55 s
▲ Reduce unused CSS	1.17 s
■ Eliminate render-blocking resources	0.54 s
■ Serve images in next-gen formats	0.45 s
■ Remove duplicate modules in JavaScript bundles	0.3 s
■ Minify JavaScript	0.15 s

## Measuring Checklist:

- ❑ Test your website through Google Tag Manager
- ❑ Test your tracking through Google Tag Manager
- ❑ Test all of your marketing funnels prior to launching your campaigns
- ❑ Put your year-end giving campaign front and center on your website. If you want to test, you can use [Google Optimize](#) to A/B test different versions of your year-end campaign messaging (depending on who is reaching you). For instance, you may want to show one version to cold traffic and another version to returning visitors or past givers.
- ❑ Additional tip: Use [Google PageSpeed insights](#) to see if your site is mobile-optimized (60% of nonprofit site visitors are on mobile). You can also use this tool to check site speed and for diagnostics on how to improve your site.
- ❑ Getting feedback on these things ahead of time is critical!



## 5. Lead with Video

### Why?

**Video ads visually create an emotional connection.** It's not just a trend anymore—it's one of the most successful fundraising tools at your disposal for Giving Tuesday and Year-End Fundraising.

There are tons of easy templates to build video whether it's in Canva or the Facebook and Google video builders. Paid Google Ads also unlock ad formats like Display & Video that offer powerful audience insights that you can apply to other marketing channels.

**It's a great way to diversify your marketing mix.** Video campaigns are often cheaper and reach a broader audience than others. And no, you don't need a videographer. There are top performing ads shot with just an iPhone as long as the story is there and you're targeting the right audience!

**Video helps with iOS 14 tracking.** Due to iOS 14 updates, it's gotten harder to track users on-site since users can now opt out of being tracked. [Learn more here.](#)

By using a highly engaging video as brand awareness or post-engagement tool, advertisers can build larger remarketing pools using 1st party data.



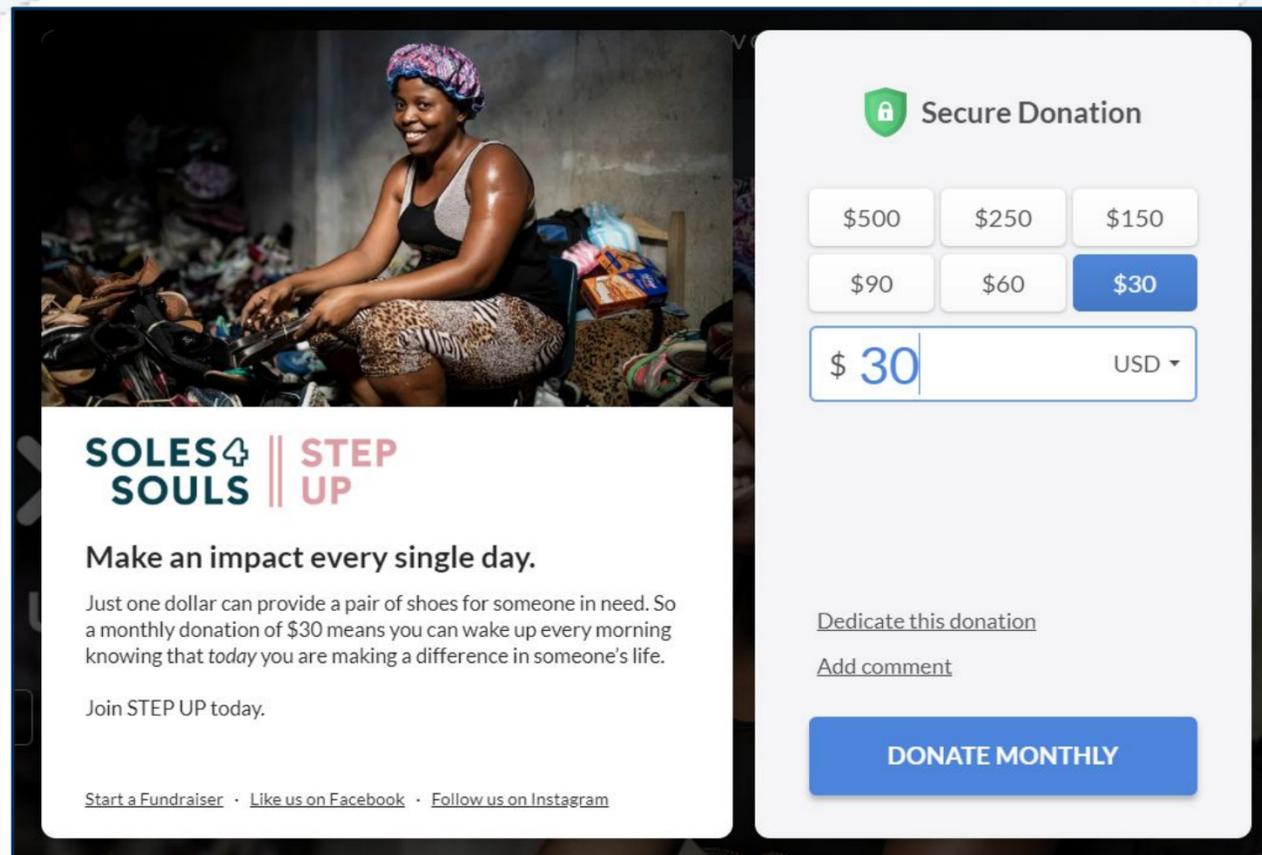
## 6. Build, Launch, and Sustain A Recurring Giving Program

### Why?

**It's Affordable:** By giving lower monthly options, your donor profile is immediately diversified

**It's a Community:** Recurring givers are much more likely to share your cause with others.

**It's Sustained Support:** 13 Months is the average time that a recurring giver stays at their initial gift size.



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Make an impact every single day.

Just one dollar can provide a pair of shoes for someone in need. So a monthly donation of \$30 means you can wake up every morning knowing that today you are making a difference in someone's life.

Join STEP UP today.

[Start a Fundraiser](#) · [Like us on Facebook](#) · [Follow us on Instagram](#)

Secure Donation

\$500 \$250 \$150

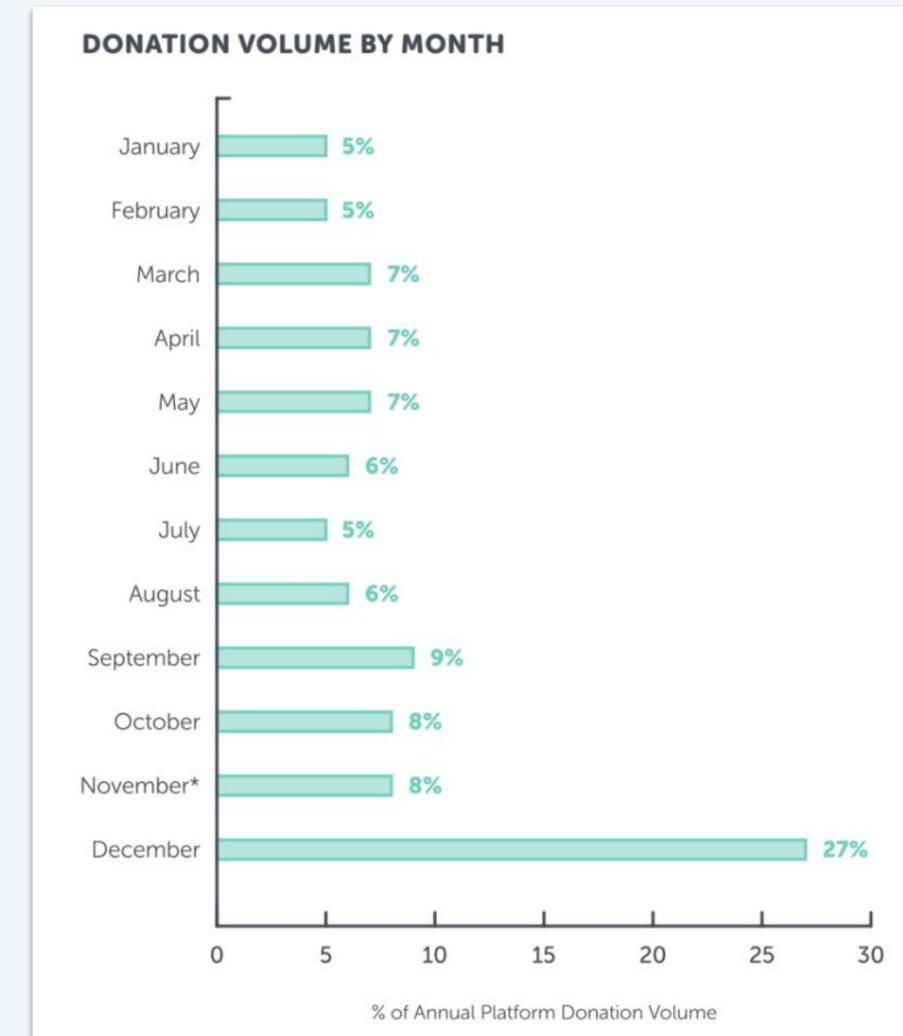
\$90 \$60 \$30

\$ 30 USD

[Dedicate this donation](#)

[Add comment](#)

**DONATE MONTHLY**



Of all one-time donors that return to start a recurring gift subscription:

**25%** proceeded to make another one-time gift

**11%** made a donation to a crowdfunding campaign

**14%** signed up to fundraise or registered to a fundraising campaign

**10%** participated in a peer-to-peer campaign



## How?

### Build Your Program

People don't give because money is burning holes in their pocket. A successful giving program starts with storytelling. Who should give, why should they give, and when should they give. \*Think Membership\*

### Scale Your Program

Using tools like Facebook and Instagram, Conversion Design, Email Automation, etc., we should help take individuals through a journey that leads them to recurring giving or membership.

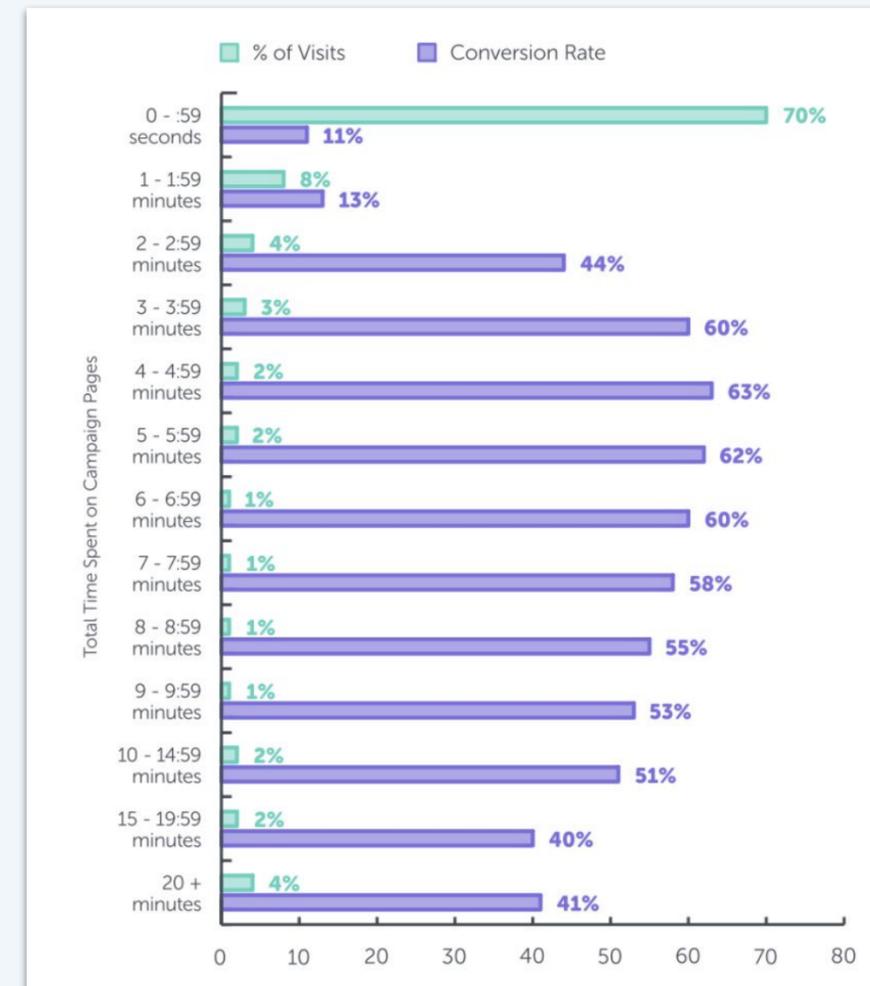
### Sustain Your Program

One of the major benefits of recurring giving is increased retention rate. When individuals are giving monthly we have time to build a relationship. We should continue to share a deeper side of our mission to those who invest and make them feel like they are a part of that story.

[The Spring](#) by Charity Water is an excellent example of this.

**Consider this...** If you are in more need of recurring gifts, **be straightforward about it**. It seems simple, but just explaining the difference of a one-time gift from a recurring gift for your organization and why it's important **is enough**. To have it land, **emphasize the benefit for the donor**:

- It's more convenient to donate through an automated recurring program
- It helps them stay connected with the organization and know where their money is going
- They can give small monthly gifts instead of one large gift



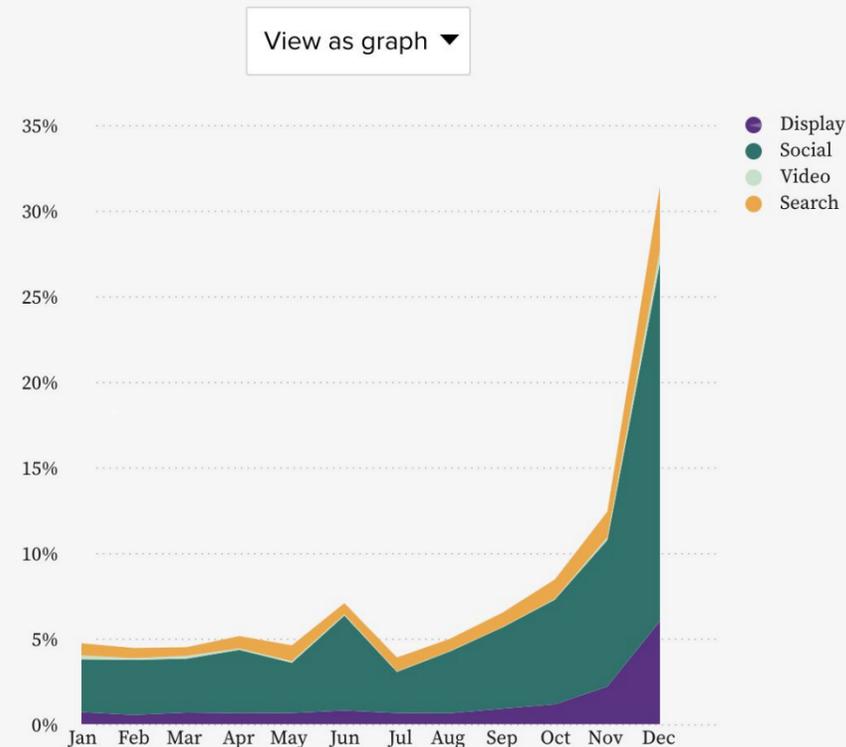
## 7. Capitalize on the Last Three Days of the Year

This report from M+R Benchmarks shows data on how nonprofits scale their digital channels towards the end of the year and which digital channels they use. Nonprofit organizations receive a whopping 50% of their annual donations during October, November, and December, and 12% of all annual donations occur during the final three days of the year (December 29, 30, and 31). To match this trend of year-end giving, one-third of all nonprofit spending occurs in December. According to M+R insights, return on ad spend has been highest for search ads (\$3.59), followed by Display (\$0.73) and then Paid Social (\$0.70).

Share of direct fundraising budget by channel

	All	Large	Medium	Small
<b>Display</b>	32%	35%	23%	2%
<b>Search</b>	1%	1%	1%	0%
<b>Social Media</b>	59%	54%	71%	96%
<b>Video</b>	5%	6%	1%	0%
<b>Other</b>	4%	4%	3%	2%

Percent of budget spent in each month



Share of digital advertising budget by goal

	All	Large	Medium	Small
<b>Branding, Awareness, or Education</b>	24%	25%	13%	46%
<b>Direct Fundraising</b>	44%	44%	51%	21%
<b>Lead Generation</b>	23%	22%	22%	32%
<b>Other</b>	9%	8%	14%	1%

If you are wondering which channels are right for your nonprofit, the most important thing is to look at what's already working. If certain campaigns are doing well then put more time and spend into those channels while pausing those that aren't working and reallocate your budget!



# Most Impactful Marketing Channels

## Paid Social: Facebook and Instagram

### BENEFITS

Ability to build and control the full marketing funnel and associated content through a single platform

### BEST USED FOR

Brand & Campaign Awareness throughout all phases of year-end fundraising, Custom storytelling & call to action by audience warmth/demographic, and Competing for the attention of donors with refined audience targeting

### CONSIDERATIONS

It can be expensive for smaller nonprofits to compete if you're just starting for year-end in Q4. Think through how to keep people on platform when possible and grow your social following and email lists now to improve Year End targeting.

## Youtube & Display

### BENEFITS

**Cost effective** way to connect & STAY connected with **large volumes** of individuals through creative assets. Learn how to use Youtube Giving for fundraising [here](#).

### BEST USED FOR

Brand & campaign awareness and facilitating multiple (new) touch points of consideration with remarketing capabilities

### CONSIDERATIONS

Can have low conversion rates for direct, last-click data  
Can require significant optimizations for relevant placements  
High quality creative necessary



# Search Advertising: Google Ad Grant & Paid Search

## BENEFITS

**Both:** Increased visibility on front page of search results if your SEO is poor or brand name or mission is common or competitive  
**Google Ad Grant:** Increase new, relevant web traffic for free

## BEST USED FOR

**Google Ad Grant:** Growing your brand awareness and remarketing audiences  
**Paid Search:** Capturing warm, non-branded traffic with actionable search intent (**RLSA**)  
**Both:** Directing traffic already searching for you to specific campaign pages

## CONSIDERATIONS

- Typical search volume and search intention can shift as people are on vacation and spending time with family
- Costs for Paid Search can increase as more people focus budget on their advertising efforts

# On-Site Conversion Design

## BENEFITS

Easily customize your creative and copy to advertise your YE campaign on your website. **Free** platforms available. Being able to streamline people's ability to get back to campaign landing pages.

## BEST USED FOR

- Dynamically showcasing your YE Campaign and **call to action** no matter where someone enters the website
- Facilitating a **streamlined path back to your campaign pages** when someone has exited the phase of consideration and is ready to convert
- Creating **urgency** during peak giving moments
- **Prevent people 'abandoning cart'** mid-donation with exit-intent pop up



# Year-End Campaign Timeline

Prepare & Analyze  
September or earlier

- ❑ Analyze data from previous campaigns & years
- ❑ Define the campaign theme
- ❑ Set target fundraising goals
- ❑ Start creating and testing content
- ❑ Segment leads
- ❑ Gather incentives, secure sponsors or matches

Pre-Wire  
&  
Gratitude  
Oct - Nov

- ❑ Pre-wire core constituents with gratitude and ads of impact
- ❑ Pre-wire new and warm, non-donor audiences with ads of impact
- ❑ Grow remarketing audiences
- ❑ Unlock early gifts without the big ask
- ❑ Continue to engage and attract users with regular posts

Full Launch  
(#GT)  
November

*Giving Tuesday serves as the main launchpoint in what is outwardly seen as the start to Year-End fundraising*

- ❑ Increase posts and promotion on Facebook
- ❑ Highlight key giving events for the weeks ahead
- ❑ Launch your #GivingTuesday campaign
- ❑ Showcase the impact made, people helped, the volunteers who make it possible
- ❑ Thank you campaign for donors & volunteers



## Engage

Early - Mid  
December

- ❑ Keep momentum building during the 'Inevitable Trough'
- ❑ Engage during **Consideration Phase**

### Channel Application Examples

- Year-End Facebook Event
- Paid Social/ Display: Fundraising benchmarks - Where are we at?
- Search Ads / Onsite CD: Create streamlined path to campaign pages

## Big Finish

End of December

- ❑ 31% of all giving occurs in December; 12% of total in the last 3 days
- ❑ **URGENCY: Compete, Remind, Compete, Make it Easy, Close**

### Channel Application Examples

- Update all copy to reflect urgency, budgets should increase, audiences should narrow to highest potential
  - Paid Social: *Conversion campaign*
  - YouTube & Display: *Remarketing only*
  - Search Advertising: *Emphasis on branded keywords*
  - Onsite Conversion Design: *Higher Frequency, Welcome Mat, Exit-Intent Pop-ups*

## Follow-Up & Gratitude

January

- ❑ Show your appreciation! **Donor stewardship** is key to ensure retention
- ❑ Share your end results and what impact that will make
- ❑ Capture last minute, afterthought donations
- ❑ Begin to analyze data and segment donors

### Channel Application Examples

- Onsite CD, Paid Social, YouTube & Display
  - *Gratitude content directing to updated Campaign Landing page with results and an option to still contribute*

## Recurring Giving

February

- ❑ Push your momentum and attention gained from Year End
- ❑ Nurture new and existing donors
  - ❑ *Ask: Why upgrading their gift to become Recurring will make the most impact in the coming year(s)*



# Wrapping Up

Good news, it is not too late! You can still begin planning your year-end strategy today. By following the steps in this guide, your nonprofit can be well on the way to a successful year-end.

Let's Recap. We...

- **Did some digging** on your nonprofits strong points and pain points in fundraising in order to be able to assess the data and choose which marketing channels are best for YOUR nonprofit in 2021.
- **Followed the 7 tips** to surpass your campaign goal and finish strong
- **Identified your nonprofits** most impactful marketing channels whether it's Facebook, Youtube & Display, Search Advertising, or Onsite Conversion Design and learned how to use them to your advantage
- **Mapped out** a year-end campaign timeline checklist with the timeline we use for all of our clients!

***Thank You for Reading!***

*Looking for in depth sessions on **analyzing data, recurring giving, and campaign creation for year-end**? Get this and 42+ recorded sessions from the Nonprofit Marketing Summit with the*

**Nonprofit Marketing Summit VIP Pass**





COMMUNITY BOOST™

Are you interested in a **complimentary** strategy session on how to take your year-end fundraising to the next level?

[communityboost.org/lets-talk](http://communityboost.org/lets-talk)



### Last Year's Impact



nonprofits directly served



online revenue generated for npos



current team members



years in business

