



From Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve, American generosity skyrockets. Year-end is a time when donors give more freely of both their time and money, and we want your nonprofit organization to be prepared to welcome donors, embrace their inquiries, and show sincere gratitude when that year-end gift is made.

Thirty percent of all annual donations occur in December. Twelve percent of all annual donations occur in the last three days of the year. And, on December 31, donations are concentrated between 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. (<https://nonprofitssource.com/online-giving-statistics>) Because New Year's Eve day is such an important day for charitable donations, do not hesitate to keep fundraising through the very end of the year. Make those calls and get out your digital media campaigns. Reinforce to donors that December 31 is not too late.

Last-minute fundraising efforts can and should be used to target prospective last-minute donors. It's a busy time of year for all, but the return for a strong end-of-year fundraising push can be well worth the time and energy.

8 Year-End Giving Strategies for Your Nonprofit

1 Dedicate your home page to your year-end campaign.
Your website should be the home base for year-end giving. It doesn't have to be complex, just consolidate the basics of who you are, what your mission is, and how donations help solve an issue or advance a cause on one campaign page. This should be front and center on your homepage.

2 Brand your donation pages for year-end giving.
Review your online donation page. If you can, brand it to fit with your end-of-year campaign. Custom-branded donation pages nested inside a nonprofit's website raise six times more money. Also, make sure the online donation portal is easily accessible no matter where the donor is coming from and double check that all giving and donations portals are optimized for mobile access. Twenty five percent of donors complete their giving on a mobile device. <https://nonprofitssource.com/online-giving-statistics>

3 Add a photo of someone helped.
Do this every place you can think of: print, email, social media, website, donation landing page, thank you landing page, even your email signature! 91 percent of holiday donors say hope and optimism are what motivate them to give (<https://givingreport.ngo>). Donors want to be inspired, not scared into supporting your cause. Be sure you show and tell stories that demonstrate the positive impact of your donors' dollars. Hopeful donors are happy donors.



4

Call your lapsed donors.

If you don't have time to call everyone, pick those who would appreciate this personalized follow-up most (e.g., larger donors, first-time, \$100+ donors, active volunteers, etc.). Consider holding a mini-phonathon and asking volunteers to help make these important calls. Send a "sorry we missed you" note with a remit envelope to anyone you don't reach personally (and leave a brief, friendly message letting them know they'll be receiving this mailing – and that they can also give via phone or online).

5

Add a lightbox to your website.

The form-based box that pops up over a website with a call-to-action is called a lightbox. It usually pops up the first-time folks come to you for the period for which you set it up – perhaps once/day during the four to six weeks you're running your year-end campaign. You or your leaders might find them annoying. But they work. And they work especially well for targeted campaigns.

6

Set up a dynamic thank you page and email response for donors giving online.

When donors give online, they should immediately be taken to an inspiring thank you landing page that makes them feel great about giving. An automatic thank you email that is not transactional in language is also sent from your giving system.

7

Write your thank you letters now.

Spend as much time on thank you copy as fundraising copy. Make sure your donor feels like a hero. Don't wait, because if you do, you'll likely not get your thank you letter out to your donor in a timely manner. If you ask well, you may get a gift. If you thank well, you make get a lifetime of gifts.

8

Communicate, communicate, communicate!

Remind your prospective donors what you stand for and what benefits they stand to gain with one weekly email each week before the end of year. Also, send out a special dedicated email early on both December 30 and December 31. As most year-end donors know they will in fact donate, they're just undecided about how much they will actually give. Make it easy for donors to "see" what their donation could do. In terms of timing, for example, on December 31 send out follow-up emails to only those donors who didn't open the first iteration of the communication. Stay on message with all social media postings and branded links back to your donation page.

Don't forget to celebrate both with your internal stakeholders like staff and volunteers, but also with your donors and social media followers! Let them know what they accomplished together. Refresh, refocus, and get ready to tackle next year's fundraising goals.

Need help with your annual appeal or year-end giving strategies?

Drop us a note at hola@cielostrategy.com

