



# *Idea* *Book*

Here are some ideas to get your online social fundraising program started!

You're welcome to these ideas. Remember, the best social fundraising program is adapted to your organization. We can help create your own social fundraising program, **so contact us today!**

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## About the Idea Book

Every organization is different, so every organization needs a different social fundraising program. However, in our experience there are a lot of best practices that are

common to many organizations. Each of these ideas can help you promote your online social fundraising system.

We hope these ideas will jog your thinking. The first step in a GGG engagement is to sit down with you and figure out *how to apply them to your organization*. We might come up with some new ideas, too!

## Timeline Segments

We've organized these ideas into three broad *timeline segments*. There are some **Easy First Steps** that you can do right now to prepare for social fundraising, a set of **Launch Tasks**

to roll out your new system successfully, and ideas for **Fueling the Fire** to keep your social fundraising system active. The book is structured by timeline segments.

## Focus Areas

We've also identified four *focus areas* for these ideas. Within each timeline segment, the ideas are organized by focus area. Some ideas fit into more than one focus area. We use these icons to describe the focus areas:



Related to e-mail communications



Related to people and organizations



Related to your website



Print or traditional media outreach

## Easy First Steps

*Here are some easy first steps you can do right now to get ready for social fundraising.*



**E-mail Newsletter.** If you don't have an e-mail newsletter, start one. It's a great way to promote your organization and collect e-mail addresses. Staff e-mail taglines are another way to encourage people to sign up.



**Promote Your E-mail Newsletter.** Make a major effort to promote your e-mail newsletter online. Aggressively capture e-mail addresses, which will serve you later in promoting social fundraising.



**Encourage online donations.** In your printed solicitation materials, remind donors that it is both easy and safe to donate online. Once you launch your social fundraising system, this reminder can be expanded to ask supporters to create their own fundraising page.



**Collect E-mail Addresses from Reply Slips.** Make sure reply slips and/or remittance envelopes in print solicitations ask for e-mail addresses. If the donor has given an e-mail address in the past, print it on the reply slip and ask if it is current.



**"Get Involved" Wording.** Identify the places your organization tells people "What Can You Do?"—including your website and any print mailings or stationery. Plan to promote the new social fundraising system in these places when you launch.



**Facebook Fan Page.** Be sure your organization has a Facebook fan page that links back to your website. Update the Facebook page on a regular basis (once a week is good for many organizations).



**Tag Lines for Staff E-mails.** Develop a set of tag lines for your staff e-mails and other routine communications, promoting your new social fundraising system (e.g.: Spread the word, support the cause. Visit <website>.) When you launch, plan to ask all staff to use one of those tags in the signature of every external e-mail.



**Tag Lines for Stationery.** Plan a tag line to promote your new fundraising website, to be included on all your new stationery. (Yes, all of it! If you ask a thousand times, you have a better chance of being heard than if you only ask once.)



**Quotable Quotes on Your Website.** Examine your website. Does it provide quick, quotable information people can use to persuade others to support your mission?



**Plan Your Financial Structure.** Do you need different bank accounts to handle tax-deductible and non-tax-deductible funds? Who will be in charge of accounting? These items are important to know in advance.

## Launch Tasks

*We recommend these activities to prepare for your social fundraising system launch.*



**It's Better to Give.** Create a package of materials for people who'd like to ask for donations to your organization in lieu of gifts for their birthday, wedding, or other special occasion. Centrally feature the role of their personalized fundraising webpage(s). Plan how you will thank and recognize them, and what materials from you might help them be more successful in their efforts.



**Incentives for Volunteer Fundraisers.** Plan some incentives for the people who will raise money for you online. For example, if someone raises 25 donations they might get a personally signed thank-you card from the President; or if they raise \$1000 they might be invited to a special conference call highlighting the good work made possible by those funds. Don't publicly release your incentives right at first, in case you have to adjust them as the social fundraising system grows.



**Plan Your Launch Article.** Pre-write an article for your e-mail and/or print newsletter about the social fundraising website. Plan to follow up with a second story highlighting the accomplishments of your most successful initial volunteer fundraisers.



**Bucksliips to Promote Social Fundraising.** Have bucksliips or similar print-mail inserts made to promote your social fundraising website, and let donors know they can increase support for your valuable work. Plan to insert the bucksliip in all routine mailings (for example, gift acknowledgments).



**Use Sub-Branding for Chapters, Affiliates, or Partners.** Use our product's sub-branding feature to create specially branded sections of your social fundraising website for chapters, affiliate organizations, fundraising partners or consortium members, as applicable. You may even wish to resell these sub-branded online partnerships to defray your engagement costs.



**Feature Your Organization's Activities in Your Recipient Directory.** Decide which recipient listings you'd like to allow donors to support on your social fundraising website. (These can be changed at any time.) They can be programs within your organization, chapters or separate organizations, or any combination.



**Choose a Smart Domain Name.** Select a short and memorable web domain name for your new social fundraising website. This can be a subdomain of your main name (e.g. <http://isupport.yourcharity.org>) or a totally different name (e.g. <http://www.excitingname.org>). Get *.org* and *.com* versions of your name to reduce user confusion.



**Set Initial Permissions.** Identify the staff members who will have administrative privileges on the social fundraising website. Include various segments of your organization and anticipate their likely needs (e.g. answering donor questions, posting new content, etc.).



**In Honor Of / In Memory Of.** Have a plan for dealing with "in honor of . . ." and "in memory of . . ." gifts that flow from the social fundraising system.



**Prepare for Inquiries.** Make sure your entire staff is introduced to the social fundraising system and prepared to answer inquiries. Include everyone!



**Start with a Small Group.** Select a group of 10-12 enthusiastic volunteers with strong personal networks. Explain the system to them and ask them to use it when it goes live, to reach out to friends to support your great cause. Offer an incentive for the one who gets the most donors in the first 30 days.



**Use Your Board.** Present the new system to your board. Encourage them to set as a minimum expectation that every board member will create a personal fundraising page when the system goes live. Provide administrative support if necessary.



**Promote the System on Your Business Cards.** If the back of your business cards is blank, consider using that space to promote your new online social fundraising system. Create a design so that all future business-card orders carry the information.



**Blast E-mail Launch.** Write a general blast e-mail to launch your social fundraising website, asking everyone to show their support by inviting their friends and family to participate in your cause. Encourage people to share why they personally choose to support your cause.

## Fueling the Fire

Here are some ideas to keep your social fundraising system active and growing!



**Giving Money Is Taking Action!** As often as possible, remember to cast giving money and raising money as taking action. Don't say, "Give today so we can \_\_\_\_." Instead say, "Help us \_\_\_\_ today!" or "Show your support for \_\_\_\_" or "Send a message: We will \_\_\_\_!" or "Let them know you care; join with us as we \_\_\_\_."



**Remind Staff to Promote the System.** Ensure staff remember to use e-mail taglines, buckslips, etc.



**Ensure Board Members Participate.** If board members haven't created their pages, help them.



**Use Matching Gifts.** Boost activity on your site by recruiting a donor who will agree to make a matching gift based on giving totals through the social fundraising system. "If we can raise \$10,000 online in the next three days, a generous donor will give us an additional \$10,000. We only have 72 hours. Please reach out to everyone you know to help us reach this goal." Or put a social spin on this by recruiting a donor to give money if a number of online participants is reached. Don't use this tactic too often, but it's a great way to create a sudden burst of energy.



**Recruit Corporate Supporters.** Encourage your friends in business to create "Employees and Friends of \_\_\_\_" pages and share them in their corporate communications. Be sure to recognize them prominently!



**Form Relationships with Bloggers.** Identify bloggers who write about your areas of interest, and reach out to them. Start out by making thoughtful comments on their blog posts, and linking to their blog. Offer expertise and information. See if you can get them to create a fundraising webpage for their blog, or drive web traffic to your social fundraising website.



**Use Celebrity Connections.** Review any and all connections your organization might have to celebrities—sports figures, entertainers, hometown heroes, or major civic leaders. A celebrity can drive a lot of web traffic to your fundraising website, simply by their mass appeal. This works especially well when they create their own (potentially co-branded) fundraising webpage. Who would be willing to create a page for you? Don't forget "niche" celebrities—it just has to be someone your supporters know and admire.



**Create YouTube Videos.** Make some videos and post them on YouTube, with links from the video to your website, and from your website to the video. You can even include videos on fundraising webpages within the social fundraising system! Interview your Executive Director, perhaps. Keep the videos short and lively.



**Link from Your Website.** Make sure your main website links to the social fundraising website as often as possible.



**Identify Opportunities to Collect E-mail Addresses.** Sign-in sheets at events should ask for them, for example.



**Use Outreach to Be Inclusive.** Who is missing from your social fundraising website? Create specific outreach plans for populations who should be engaged in the system but are currently underrepresented. You might find opportunities for low-hanging fruit!



**Identify Success Stories.** Monitor your social fundraising website for innovative, heartwarming examples of peer-to-peer fundraising. Is anyone using the system creatively? Is someone unusual engaged? Is there a story that would capture the interest of your donors and encourage them to give the system a try? Have young people raised surprisingly large amounts of money, or has someone your organization has helped made a webpage?



**Recognize Special Successes.** If you find an especially heartwarming story—like a third-grader who collects \$100 in donations by asking for them instead of a birthday party—recognize that effort beyond what you'd normally do for the given amount of money. Stories like this tug on heartstrings and encourage a multiplier effect in giving.



**Respond to Current Events.** Have a plan to respond when news-cycle events highlight your areas of work. Online giving, driven by e-mail, can be very reactive to breaking news. Monitor the media for such opportunities and be creative in alerting your supporters to the news and driving them to the fundraising website.



**Monitor Your Statistics.** Keep track of your web statistics, both on the social fundraising system and on your main website. Try to learn what brings people to your website, and what keeps them there.



**Keep Your Website Updated.** Update your website often, to give people a reason to visit often.



**Use the Event Ticketing Feature.** Review all the events for which your organization might use the ticketing feature that comes with your social fundraising system. Consider ticketing for an event even if you plan to allow people in on the day of the event. This will drive people to the website who might not otherwise take a look. Consider also offering special tickets with VIP privileges.



**Promote Special Days.** Check your calendar for special days or community events to suggest to your supporters as good times to promote their fundraising pages. For example, a human-rights organization might highlight International Human Rights Day.



**Hold Conference Calls.** Stage a conference call to update key supporters on your progress. Use the ticketing feature to make the call a fundraiser. Don't forget to ask everyone to show their support on their own page.



**Recognize, Recognize, Recognize!** Take every possible opportunity to recognize and thank your supporters who raise money for you online. The more you do this, the better your fundraising website looks.



**Create a Culture of Philanthropy.** Throughout your social fundraising efforts, keep in mind that you are helping to create a culture of philanthropy. This is important, mission-oriented work. ***Thank you for doing it!***



For more information, please visit our website at  
<http://www.grassrootsgivinggroup.com>

Grassroots Giving Group, Inc., is a full-service social fundraising company, complementing our cutting-edge website platform with the implementation expertise only we can offer.

**People give more, and they give more often,  
when they're asked to give by someone  
they know and trust.**