

2021 Year-End Fundraising Timeline


Scheduling Your Campaign

Your communications schedule is a critical part of your success—leveraging multiple channels and timing the communications for the greatest response. Test and learn from the times that you sent your emails. Note the dates of all communications so you have a starting point for next year. For example, data shows that giving is concentrated between 12-7 p.m. on December 31st. Popular times to send emails during the week are 6 a.m., 10 a.m., 2 p.m., and 8 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday is great for reaching contacts who use their work-related email. Sometimes the weekend is smart for youth-oriented, arts, animal, or other similar missions (or if you have predominately personal email addresses). Your best bet is to test email dates and times to see what works best for your constituency.











Here is a timeline you can use to schedule your campaign. Tasks with a 🌱 can be easily performed in Network for Good’s fundraising software.

DATE	FORMAT	TASK
By Thursday, 10/28	website social media	Create an Everyday Giving Page in your fundraising software for your year-end campaign. Design a banner or pop up/light box for your website’s homepage promoting the fundraising campaign. The banner will run on your website for the next two months. Draft a plan for social media content—pull together core messages and photos so you’ll have a sense of your inventory and they will be available when needed. You can fill in more detail once ramp-up starts.
Friday, 10/29	website	Launch the banner ad on your website’s homepage to promote your year-end campaign. It’s go time!
Friday, 10/29	social media	Begin ramping up your social presence (25-50 percent more activity). Post regularly for the next two months so you are at the top of news-feeds during giving season. Spotlight key volunteers and service recipients, share exciting happenings and impact from the year, begin sharing goals for 2021. Where appropriate (but not on every post) link to the donate page. <i>Note: Election Day is November 3, and is likely to affect national and local news. Be sure to consider the timing of your campaign against the very crowded political messaging environment.</i>
Friday, 10/29	🌱 email	Email to re-introduce donors and non-donors to your organization. Share a few of your organization’s major accomplishments from this year. Highlight how the support of generous donors helped you advance your mission. It’s important to re-engage donors your mission before you share personal stories and ask for contributions.

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Thursday, 11/4	 email	Tell a story in the third person that highlights the tangible impact of your work.
Week of November 15	phone script	Develop the phone script for board members and other volunteers to make their calls. The goal is deepened engagement—ask what inspires your giving, etc. Collect and leverage their stories.
Wednesday, 11/17	 direct mail	Time the arrival of your direct mail letter to land in mailboxes by or around mid-November. This letter matches your year-end theme and the graphics used in your campaign emails and social posts. Optional: send a second letter or postcard to those who haven't responded to arrive by the end of the first week of December. The additional touch can be a useful reminder for well-meaning procrastinators.
Monday, 11/22 and Tuesday, 11/23	phone call  video message	Board makes thank you phone calls or send personal video messages to the top donors from 2021 (to date). There is no direct appeal for funds in this communication. Record any relevant contact feedback/notes in your donor management system.
Monday, 11/22	 direct mail	Send hand written thank you notes to top 10-20 donors to arrive before Thanksgiving.
Wednesday, 11/24	 email  text message  video message	Thank you emails can go out to volunteers, the board, etc. to express appreciation for all they do and wish them a happy Thanksgiving. Alternatively, you can send a thank you text or video message.
Wednesday, 11/24	social media	Thank you post on social media. This can include a nice harvest picture or one that shows the joys of volunteering/contributing. There is no ask for a donation, instead focus on gratitude for the support you have received from so many volunteers and donors over the year(s).
Friday, 11/26	website social media	Launch a banner on your website's homepage for #GivingTuesday and add the #GivingTuesday logo to your campaign donation page. Post a "save the date" on social media for #GivingTuesday. You can find a handy #GivingTuesday toolkit (with logos) by clicking here .
Sunday, 11/28	 email	Email blast to promote the power of numbers on #GivingTuesday— consider announcing a matching gift to encourage contributions.
Sunday, 11/28	social media	Post on social "Are you ready to make a difference for #GivingTuesday?" to create excitement.
Monday, 11/29	 text message	Fill out the form within your fundraising software to begin sending text messages. Send a get ready to make an impact on #GivingTuesday text message. Repeat again on #GivingTuesday.

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Tuesday, 11/30	 email  text message	<p>Up to three emails and text messages promoting day-of giving on #GivingTuesday. Use #GivingTuesday logos/hashtags where appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early morning (around 5 a.m.): Please join our national day of giving. • Noon: Updating your contacts on your progress against your goal and encouraging prospects to give by the end of the day. • Early evening (around 7 p.m.): Announcing that time is running out and you are sooo close to your goal (or that there is still time to give)—please help us! Show a progress thermometer or another graphic that highlights your goal.
Tuesday, 11/30	social media	Posting throughout the day to encourage giving, share gift results/momentum, and highlight impact. Use logos/hashtags for #GivingTuesday where appropriate.
Wednesday, 12/1	website	Post a thank you banner for gifts received on #GivingTuesday and remove #GivingTuesday logos and wording from website banner and campaign donation page. You will want to officially remove any reference to #GivingTuesday in your banners and on your donation pages by Thursday, 12/2, so there is complete focus on your year-end campaign.
Wednesday, 12/1	 direct mail  phone call	If possible, call every new donor from #GivingTuesday to personally thank him/her for choosing your organization. Ask what inspired the gift and their communication preferences for the future. Enter relevant call notes/insights into the contact record in your fundraising software. Thank-you personal video messages or postcards can be a nice addition, or alternative, to leaving a voicemail if no one answers the phone.
Rest of December	social media	Increase your posting cadence to at least two to three times per week. Spotlight your programs, incredible volunteers, profile a major donor. Slip in an ask (modeled after your campaign theme) every three posts.
Tuesday, 12/7	 email	Email blast to encourage giving during the year-end campaign (suppress anyone who has given so far). Tell a story, use a testimonial. Use some of your communication language in a social media post the next day.
Second week of December	phone call	Board members call lapsed 2020 major gift donors (or those who gave early in the year and you'd like to request another gift) to thank them for their prior giving and to ask them to give before the end of the year. "Your contribution will help XX [service recipients] and enable us to expand our outreach."
Tuesday, 12/14	 email  text message	Optional reminder email blast and text message to encourage giving during the year-end campaign (suppress anyone who has given so far). It's important to talk about the spirit of generosity and gratitude that comes with the holiday season. Express gratitude for what has been accomplished. Appeal to donors/non-donors to show their support. This email should come from yourself, your board president, or someone of influence (from their business email) rather than from your standard organization email address (i.e. JaneDoe@xcharity.org vs. xcharity@xcharity.org). Use some of your communication language in a social media post the next day.
Tuesday, 12/28	social media	Ramp up asks for giving through the rest of the year. A short pitch can be made at the end of a content related post.



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Tuesday, 12/28	 email  text message	Reminder email mentioning that there are only a few days left to give and be recognized as a 2021 donor. If possible, announce a matching gift to propel additional gifts.
Wednesday, 12/29	 email  text message	Email blast with "Please make a difference today" (use more specific mission-related language if possible) promotion. If you are close to your goal, mention where you are against your campaign goal.
Thursday, 12/30	 email  text message	Final email of the campaign to encourage gifts by midnight on December 31. Send a thank you email to all who contributed. Include an update on dollars raised and good tidings for the New Year.
First two weeks of January	 email  direct mail	Send direct mail thank you letters to major donors. Prepare 2021 donation summaries to be direct mailed or emailed.
Last two weeks of January	 email  direct mail	Create an internal campaign report to highlight results and lessons learned. Ensure your data from the year-end campaign is clean and organized in your fundraising software. Identify any first-time donors (they are tagged in your fundraising software) and put them into your queue to receive newsletters and other general communications. Consider asking a board member make thank you calls or send personal video messages to new donors. As an engagement tool, consider sending a donor welcome kit (welcome letter and brochures) by direct mail to new donors. Set yourself up for a smooth and successful 2022.

Ready to get started with a Personal Fundraising Coach to help you knock this year-end out of the park?

LEARN MORE

From all of us at Network for Good, best wishes for a smooth and successful giving season!