The Wonders of a Great Post-Donation Experience

Keep the love alive! Your donation confirmation is a great opportunity to keep that "helper's high" going while the donor is feeling great about your work.

Your Most Valuable Donor Retention Real Estate

Your post-donation experience has a lot riding on it. Think of it as a launch pad for happy donors.

According to the Association of Fundraising Professionals' Fundraising Effectiveness Survey Report, for every 100 new donors that nonprofits gained, 105 walked out. Not exactly the growth most nonprofits are looking for.

One of the best ways to reduce donor churn is to place a priority on high-quality donor communications. Your job isn't done once someone clicks to submit their donation. The post-donation confirmation page is your first opportunity to show donors that they made the right decision when they gave to your organization—and can make or break your chances of getting another gift.

★ Tip: Your confirmation page should complement the entire experience of your campaign. Match this page to your website, appeal, and donation page.

What to Offer Donors After They Give

Your donors are giving to you and the people you help. Once they complete their gift, a robotic message like "your donation has been processed" will just not do.

Here are your post-donation musts:

Send a confirmation and receipt.

The confirmation page should reassure donors that their gift was successfully completed. Your donors should also receive an emailed receipt that includes a summary of the donation details and information on tax deductibility. Your confirmation page should also list this information.

Offer a warm thank you.

Let's agree on this: A receipt is not a thank you. Since we've established that you are not a robot, your donation confirmation page should feature a nice thank you message that was written by a real human. Next, help donors feel great about giving by sending them a warm, timely thank you letter.

Stay in touch and keep them up to date on their donation's impact so they feel like a true part of your community. When donors know their gift is appreciated and made a difference, they're more likely to give again.

Enable and encourage social sharing.

Make it easy for donors to share your message and raise money on your behalf. Include social sharing buttons on your donation confirmation and thank you pages, as well as in thank you letters and follow-up emails.

Enlist donors as advocates.

Enthusiastic supporters are often your best spokespeople. Let their passion create a wave of donations by giving donors a way to reach out to specific connections via email. Provide some suggested language to help them talk about your cause and the impact donations will have. You can also teach them how to set up a fundraising campaign with a peer-to-peer fundraising page.

Plan for a Long-Term Relationship

Beyond your confirmation page, you need to have a process in place for developing a relationship with your donors. Making good on your promises and keeping donors involved and informed about their impact will help you improve donor retention rates. As you think about your donor stewardship plan, ask yourself these eight key questions:

1. Who is primarily responsible for donor communication and donor retention?

2. How will you thank donors once a donation is made?

3. How often do you plan to update donors on the impact of their gift?

4. What is your policy on timing before asking for another gift?

5. Will you have any special programs or events that are exclusive to donors?

6. Do longtime or high-dollar donors get special treatment or acknowledgment?

7. How do you plan to gather feedback from your donors?

8. How will you track and report on donor retention?

★ Tip: Create a donor retention plan that reflects your organization's personality and values. For more ideas, download our Donor Stewardship Checklist .

As part of your post-donation experience, remember to have a plan for implementing donor options such as thank you gifts, memorial gift acknowledgements, or matching gift follow-up.