

ADVOCACY

ACTION KIT

PREPARING FOR A NEW ADMINISTRATION



RALLY. ORGANIZE. IMPACT POLICY.

Since November 8th, nonprofits have experienced a surge in donations and membership sign-ups. In the week following the 2016 election, the American Civil Liberties Union reported receiving more than \$7 million from about 120,000 donations¹. Planned Parenthood reported receiving donations from nearly 200,000 individuals².



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. — Margaret Mead

1 <http://nyti.ms/2h62Hxs>
2 <http://nyti.ms/2h61pCB>

LOOKING FORWARD

Similarly, news media subscriptions have skyrocketed. Within a month of election night, The New York Times has had over 130,000 new subscribers sign up for digital and print services. What is motivating this torrent of support?

Opinions differ and the future is murky - but one thing is clear: civic engagement is booming. People feel compelled to take action and make change happen—right now.

As we head into 2017, the challenge for most organizations will be how to continue engaging individuals who are fired up to make their voice heard in the new administration, new Congress, and new state legislatures.

When it comes to rallying your troops, you'll want to think about your targets, potential supporters, allies, and opponents. Consider details that influence legislators, such as populations with a higher concentration of swing voters, or a legislator's association with certain boards.

Gather all of the information you can about your target(s) to strategically plan how you are going to focus your efforts. Can you form coalitions with any other organizations? Can you organize some real-life actions at a meeting or in a public space? Do you need to write talking points for phone actions?

Considering your audience from many angles will help you make the most of your resources. Our advocacy action kit is designed to nurture newly minted constituents through strategic, purposeful communications that inspire passion and action.

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TARGETED LETTERS

TARGETED LETTER Example

MESSAGE

Subject: Support the Personal Care Products Safety Act

As an EWG supporter, I urge you to support the Personal Care Products Safety Act introduced by Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D - Calif.) and Susan Collins (R - Maine).

For too long, companies have been able to sell cosmetics to consumers like me without having to prove they are safe. Legislation requiring cosmetic safety is long overdue.

I urge you to support the Personal Care Safety Act.

CONTACT

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

City:

State:

Zip:

Country:

TELL THE SENATE: SUPPORT SAFER COSMETICS!

Right now, cosmetics companies can put just about anything in their products - even chemicals associated with cancer and endocrine disruption. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D - Calif.) and Susan Collins (R - Maine) have introduced a bill that would require cosmetics companies to prove that their products are safe before marketing them and would give the Federal Food and Drug Administration the power to review risky ingredients.

1 Content courtesy of the Environmental Working Group

MISSION STATEMENT

The Environmental Working Group's mission is to empower people to live healthier lives in a healthier environment. With breakthrough research and education, we drive consumer choice and civic action

TARGETED LETTER Template

MESSAGE

Subject: Make the subject a clear call to action

Letter: Include why you care about the bill, who has introduced or is backing the initiative, and why it is necessary for legislation to be passed.

CONTACT

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

City:

State:

Zip:

Country:

Strong Call to Action Statement

Include a final CTA urging people to take action. Include your mission statement on the document as well to keep your organization's purpose top of mind.

TARGETED LETTER Best Practices

BE CLEAR

Be brief, topic-focused, and action-oriented. Try to keep statements to one paragraph.

HIGHLIGHT BENEFITS

How will your legislator benefit by supporting your position? Provide some details on why their support will not only help your organization, but their constituents as well.

MAKE IT EASY FOR THE RECIPIENT

When you deliver messages en masse, printing a bunch of letters may be visually impactful, but make sure to include digital files for your full list, delivering not just PDFs of your letters but the spreadsheet containing the constituents' names and addresses so that the legislator's staff can easily record the actions.



GET TO KNOW YOUR GRASSROOTS SUPPORTERS





GET TO KNOW YOUR SUPPORTERS

Sample Questions

As you interact with your supporters online, take the opportunity to ask the following questions:

1. The Salsa Foundation will be working on these agenda items in 2017. Which do you think should be our biggest priority? (*Select one*)

- ☐ LGBTQ Rights
- ☐ Transgender Youth
- ☐ Caregivers
- ☐ Workplace Benefits

2. In addition to these issues, what other items do you think the Salsa Foundation should be focusing on in the months ahead? (*Fill in*)

3. Which of the following activities are you willing to participate in to support the Salsa Foundation's work? (*Select One*)

- ☐ Email elected officials
- ☐ Call elected officials
- ☐ Neighborhood canvassing
- ☐ Attend an event

4. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us? (*Fill in*)

GET TO KNOW YOUR SUPPORTERS

Template

Explain why you are interested in learning more about your grassroots constituents and how their feedback will enable the organization to mobilize them in the most effective way.

1. The [Organization] will be working on these agenda items in 2017. Which do you think should be our biggest priority? (Select one)

- ☐ Item A
- ☐ Item C

- ☐ Item B
- ☐ Item D

2. In addition to these issues, what other items do you think the [Organization] should be focusing on in the months ahead? (Fill in)

3. Which of the following activities are you willing to participate in to support the [Organization's] work? (Select one)

- ☐ Activity A
- ☐ Activity B

- ☐ Activity C
- ☐ Activity D

4. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us? (Fill in)

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR SUPPORTERS Best Practices

KNOW YOUR GOAL

As you build your survey, make sure the objective is clear. Be transparent about the survey's purpose and how responses will impact your decision-making process.

SEGMENT

Be specific about which donor personas you send the survey to. Questionnaires are a great way to get feedback, but sending people multiple surveys to ask general questions will be a big turn off. Consider incentivizing the survey with something that will resonate with your selected audience.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Be direct with your questions and make sure to clarify how you want people to answer. For example, indicate if it is ok for people to select more than one multiple choice answer or if you would like them to stick to just one. Finally, brevity is the name of the game. Surveys should be 10 questions or less.

PETITIONS



PETITION Example

CONTACT

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

City:

State:

Zip:

Country:

Support the 21st Century Cures Act

The 21st Century Cures Act includes \$4.8 billion in new funding for critical research at the National Institutes of Health, the largest source of funding for ALS research; \$1.5 billion for the president's Medicine Initiative; and \$500 million to the Food and Drug Administration to accelerate drug approvals.

The 21st Century Cures Act is ground breaking legislation that has been passed by the House of Representatives and has wide-spread support in the Senate but its final passage remains uncertain. If the legislation is not passed before the end of the year, it will have to be re-introduced in the new Congress and new

Presidential Administration.

We need your help now to have the legislation voted on before the end of the current Congress.¹

¹ <http://bit.ly/2hvu8Um>

PETITION Template

ACTIONABLE TITLE

Give a short background of the issue. Explain what it means, who it affects, who is in support of it and why, and how it will make a difference. If applicable, share information about what parties are opposing your viewpoint, and why the public should support your position.

Bullet out the points you want to focus on:

- Fact A
- Fact B
- Fact C

Share the issue's journey, and why it is imperative to take action right now. If applicable, share images, quotes, or stories from people affected by the problem.

CONTACT

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

City:

State:

Zip:

Country:



PETITION Best Practices

MAKE A DELIVERY PLAN

To cut through the clutter and get their attention, you need to have a great delivery plan for petitions and actions. The most effective online organizations deliver their petitions in person with great fanfare, and get video and photos to report back to their members.

USE POWERFUL SYNTAX

"Stop", "Demand", "Unite." Whatever your call to action is, make sure that you are using a powerful verb to communicate your ask in a clear and compelling way. The more visual your language, the more likely you are to capture the interest of your target.

POWER-PACKED VISUALS

Include pictures and/or videos that will catch your target's attention.

CLEARLY EXPLAIN THE PETITION'S PURPOSE

In one paragraph, explain why the issue is important

and why it is worth your target's time and energy.

PETITION THERMOMETERS

Thermometers are a clear way to show your petition's progress toward your goal. Supporters want to know the impact of their activity.

SOCIAL SHARING

Help them get the word out with social sharing buttons.

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

Now that you understand the most effective ways to rally your supporters and they have taken an action for your organization, it's time to convert your grass-roots activists into contributing donors.

One way to kick off this process is to explain why fundraising is important, and how funds are used to further your nonprofit's mission and vision.



FUNDRAISING EMAIL SERIES



FUNDRAISING EMAIL TEMPLATE 1 OF 4

OBJECTIVE: GET SUPPORTERS
INVOLVED

Subject Line A: Your Chance to Be a Hero

Subject Line B: Join Us in Raising Money for [Cause]

Hi [First Name]

I am so excited to announce that this year's [insert campaign name/event name] will be held on [insert date] at [insert location].

Your support over the years has been extremely instrumental to the success of [insert your organization name] and the furthering of [insert cause] in our community and around the world.

I'm writing you today to ask you to take another step with us as we look to make [campaign name/event name] the most successful fundraising event of the year.

Would you consider participating in and raising money for [insert campaign name/event name] by telling people in your network about the cause you support? We'd love your help in spreading awareness and reaching new audiences with a cause that both you and I care deeply about.

We've secured an online fundraising platform where you can form your own personal fundraising page and load pictures, tell stories, and tell your friends and family to visit. Check it out here: [Insert Link]

I can't thank you enough for your support and your consideration.

Gratefully,
Name, Title
Organization
Point of Contact
Website

FUNDRAISING EMAIL TEMPLATE 2 OF 4

OBJECTIVE: ENCOURAGE
CONSTITUENTS TO REACH OUT

Subject Line A: First 50 to \$50 Win [Insert Incentive]

Subject Line B: Having Trouble Getting the Word Out?

Hi [Insert name],

I'm thrilled you got started with your own personal fundraising page! The [insert event/campaign] is still [time until event] away, so there's still plenty of time to get the word out.

We're offering a [insert gift] to the next 50 people who hit the \$50 dollar fundraising mark!

Try sending a note like this [hyperlink] to your friends and family members to encourage them to sponsor you and support [insert cause].

Let us know if we can help in any way and thanks for your ongoing support!

Best,
[Insert Development Director Name]
[Organization Name]
Point of Contact
Website

FUNDRAISING EMAIL TEMPLATE 3 OF 4

OBJECTIVE: MOTIVATE WITH
COMPETITION + DEADLINES

Subject Line A: [Insert Name] is in the Lead with [insert number] Days Left!

Subject Line B: Who can Beat [Insert Name]?

[Insert Name],

Competition is heating up. With only [insert days] left until the event, [insert leader name] is in the lead having raised [insert amount].

Here's what the top 5 looks like:
[Insert top 5 fundraisers list]

Don't forget, the top 5 individual fundraising will win [insert award]. More importantly, we've raised [insert amount] so far for [insert cause]. Let's see if we can get to [insert goal] with one final push.

Keep up the great work. We can't thank you enough!

Good luck!
Name, Title
Organization
Point of Contact
Website

FUNDRAISING EMAIL TEMPLATE 4 OF 4

OBJECTIVE: THANK + ENCOURAGE
FURTHER INVOLVEMENT

Subject Line A: Thank you again. Here are the final numbers.

Subject Line B: Here's what's happening with the funds you raised

[Insert picture of event/or still frame with video button]

[Insert Name],

We reached our goal, and you're the reason why! Thank you so very much for your enthusiastic participation in [insert campaign/event] over the last [insert time frame].

The [insert photo/video] above is [describe photo or video] that underscored the huge success of this year's [insert event or campaign]. Here are the final numbers: [insert final fundraising/participation numbers].

The new funds will go immediately toward [insert where they will go and who will be helped].

Please let us know if you have any suggestions for future events. We would love your input.

On behalf of everyone here at [insert organization], THANK YOU!

Sincerely,
Name, Title
Organization
Point of Contact
Website

FUNDRAISING EMAIL BEST PRACTICES

TELL A GOOD STORY

Begin your fundraising appeal with an emotional story about an individual who benefitted from your work. Make that individual the protagonist of your story. Make them the hero, not your organization.

MAKE IT ABOUT THEM

Fundraising works best when it is personal. Think of your appeal as a unique opportunity to develop a relationship with somebody who cares about your work and wants to hear from you. Share why their support is invaluable, and connect their support to your outcome. Use the person's first name and write the email using the second person narrative ("you," not "we," or "I.")

BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT HOW FUNDING WILL BE USED

Donors want to understand how their money helps your

organization. Connect the dots of their support to your initiative's success.

TELL THEM THEY CAN SAY NO

People tend to give more substantial donations when they feel that their time and money is valued. Make the points above, but also include non-monetary ways that a constituent can help your organization.

KEEP IT SHORT

- Limit paragraphs to 2-3 sentences
- Limit the overall email to

2-3 paragraphs

- Break up text with headlines¹

1 <http://bit.ly/2hAoQqB>



FUNDRAISING EMAIL BEST PRACTICES

The 5 Keys to a Successful Fundraising Email

SUCCINCT

Emails should rarely exceed 500 words

DIRECT

Match the email to the donation page

POWERFUL

Ask the heart, not the head. An image really is worth a thousand words

OPTIMIZED

Data junkie with a big list? Do an a/b test

REPETITIOUS

Link to the donation page multiple times. Don't forget to include sidebars and CTAs!

CLOSE THE LOOP





CLOSE THE LOOP EXAMPLE

Dear Bill,

First and foremost, I wanted to thank you again for fundraising for the X organization. We are thankful for all of our supporters, but your work truly impressed us. The \$500 amount you raised was over 8x the average among our fundraisers! Your hard work will provide camp scholarships for 92 children, given them a life-changing summer experience.

I'd love to speak with you about your fundraising success and maybe you can give me some tips for our next peer-to-peer campaign this July. Would you be available for coffee this Friday afternoon?

Sincerely,
Name, Title
Organization
Point of Contact
Website

CLOSE THE LOOP

Example

Dear [Name/s],

It is so heartening when we receive a gift that allows us to say “yes” to one more child who wants to go to camp. I wanted to reach out to you personally to share some thanks from our scholarship recipients:

“Without the Salsa Foundation, Sam would have sat around the house all day. He probably would not have the confidence to jump off the diving board in 9 ft of water. I would not have been able to work with no day camp services. Thank you so much!”

“My kids love coming to Camp Salsa to play basketball and go swimming. It gives them a chance to interact with other children which helps them develop social skills.”

As a child, going to camp changed my life. Because of you, Camp Salsa can open the door to more families experiencing financial hardship. Your gift will go towards an improved arts and crafts center, which will open in spring 2018.

Sincerely,

Name, Title
Point of Contact
Organization Name
Website

CLOSE THE LOOP

Best Practices

Check this out - when surveyed, 85% of donors reported that they would 'definitely' or 'probably' support a charity again if they received a personal thank you note and 86%¹ stated that they would 'definitely' or 'probably' give a larger gift. Here our best practices for writing meaningful thank you notes.

WHO IS THE DONOR?

The first step in writing a meaningful thank you note is understanding who the donor is. Take the time to research the history they have with your organization. Are they a first time donor? A volunteer? Knowing this background context shows that you are listening and paying attention.

WHICH CAMPAIGN DID THEY GIVE TO?

The second step is researching which campaign they gave to and how much they donated. Think of it like this - when you write a thank you note, you mention the gift you received to show the person that you appreciate their specific present. Writing

donor thank you letters and emails work the same way.

COMMUNICATE HOW THEIR GIFT WILL MAKE AN IMPACT

Give specifics about where donor dollars will go. Will contributions be used for advances in research? To mobilize legislative advocates? To fund a big marketing campaign? Or to help directly with programmatic work? Whatever it is, be up front and transparent. Explain how this specific line of work will impact your overall mission.

Sharing this information makes the donor confident about their choice to give to

your organization. It builds trust and creates a precedent for transparency in future interactions.

tone

It's not what you say - it's how you say it. Donors know when you are being sincere, and when you are just writing another form letter.

BE TIMELY

95% of donors surveyed by Donor-Centered Fundraising said that they would be very appreciative if the organization contacted them within a day or two of

¹ <http://bit.ly/2hHzA6J>

receiving their gift just to say thank you.²³

SHARE PHOTOS

You've probably heard that images say a thousand words. But these days the power of images is only increasing, so use them! And you don't have to be a National Geographic photographer to capture people's attention.

Try to capture the passion behind your work - volunteers passing out information, rallies, fundraising events, families and communities coming together to support your cause.

KEEP IT SHORT

At the end of the day, donors keep your organization alive, and you should let them know how grateful you are of that.

Take the necessary time to send your donors the thank you notes they deserve. They will appreciate being appreciated, and you will be grateful for their continued support.

WHAT TO SEND TO YOUR ENTIRE AUDIENCE

- Total amount raised
- Dollars translated into impact/resources

2 <http://bit.ly/2hHzA6J>

3 <http://bit.ly/2hHLYn8>

- #New donors
- # Donors who raised over X amount
- Contextualize results

translating the amount they fundraised into impact statements

"46% of donors stop giving for reasons that are connected to a 'failure to communicate'." - Donor-Center Fundraising¹

1 <http://bit.ly/2hHzA6J>

with previous campaign numbers

WHERE TO SHARE

Share high level campaign summary results on the campaign website, via email, and on your blog.

WHAT TO SEND TO CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING ROCKSTARS

- Communicate how impressed you are
- Compare constituent's fundraising stats with the average individual fundraising amount for the campaign
- Note their accomplishments by

WHERE TO SHARE

Share this information in your personal thank you email to the donor as well as your handwritten thank you note follow-up.