

A Dozen COVID-19 Donor Communications Tips

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1. Don't talk about YOU

This is about them and what they are experiencing. You may be the least important thing they are dealing with this week. Give them the information they need and express your sympathies, but don't talk all about yourself and your process and organization.

2. Be Real, Be Vulnerable

We don't have all of the answers nor will we. Be honest and be kind, come across as vulnerable and empathetic. Give updates as needed but not unnecessarily. Don't add to the noise, stand above it.

3. Reach out Now and Often

People are feeling isolated and also crowded. Depending on their situation, you may be the only voice they hear or face they see that day. Check in on your planned giving donors, on all of the donors you have but especially those that might need some extra TLC. Focus on what YOU can do for THEM!!

4. Have an Appropriate Sense of Humor

It's ok to laugh, it's not ok to make fun of the situation. Know the difference. Send us fun videos of remote video meeting fails and other funny things.

5. Show, Don't Tell

Video is so much better right now! Get your leadership on video, Thankviews to individual constituents, so much better than a long email full of text. But, use closed captioning and keep it short!

6. Provide Value

What can your organization add to my life? Are you a zoo that can livestream animals? Do you have scientists that can talk facts? A library that can share materials? Help for anxiety or stress? A museum? What about a college of education that can help people homeschooling? Technology resources? What do ya got?



7. This is NOT business as usual

Please don't pretend like it is. This is the most disruptive thing since World War II for most people. People are anxious and concerned and rightfully so. COVID-19 will forever change who we are and how we act as a society.

8. Don't use words like CANCEL, or ENDING

Use softer words like postponing or rescheduling, they are less final and can cause less panic.

9. Take care of Your People

And tell your supporters about it. It's so much bigger than fundraising and donations now, 1 in 5 households has someone out of work because of this crisis.

10. Support Small Businesses

Some have lost 100% of our income. Put together a list of your alumni who own small businesses and ask your donors and alumni to support them and help keep them afloat.

11. Adapt your Recurring Communications

Turn off the reminders and automatic items and get more genuine and more plugged in. From your social media to your emails, pre-programmed isn't the way right now. Be able to respond in the moment. Here is a sample of an acknowledgment you can send instead of your normal ones. bit.ly/covidack

12. Pivot to Funding Opportunities that are Real and Timely

Don't raise money for your campaign or annual fund right now, do pivot to supporting those most in need, students remaining on campus, animals that need care, unemployed people, those that are especially hard hit. Once the dust settles then you can ease back into other fundraising priorities. Steward and Thank and check in on!!

