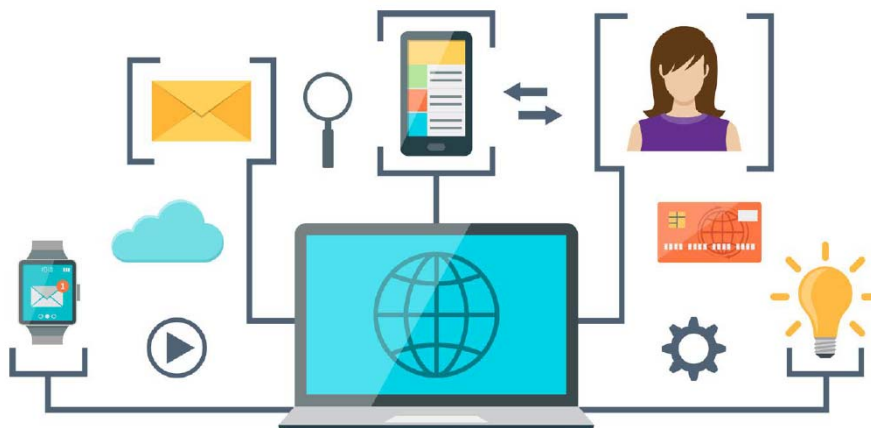

The Digital Divide

Because of the growing number of digital channels available for interacting with supporters, it can be hard to know where to start.



While there are many options to consider, a good first step for communicating information to those who support your organization is email. Costs associated with using email are lower and the return on investment can be greater than other digital channels.

Keep in mind research shows that multichannel donors give more often, have higher average gifts, and are worth significantly MORE to your organization. Make sure that you identify different ways to communicate with your donors as you define procedures and processes for your email program.

Growing Your Email Address List

The more email addresses you have, the greater the potential for meeting your program goals. The table below identifies different options for growing your email address list and includes a description of each.

Option	Description
eAppend	Acquire email addresses for your direct mail house file. Cost is typically less than 15 cents per name.

Option	Description
Search Engine Marketing Google Grant	Google Grant is a way to get \$10,000 per month in free search ads from Google. Typically works best when paired with a paid Google ad strategy and when supplemented by remarketing.
Website Organic	Include an email list sign up prominently on your website. Once they sign up, immediately shepherd through a welcome series.
Email List Rentals	These are very high risk so check with your email blast service provider before you pay to determine if they will send to a non-opted-in list. (MailChimp will not).
Petitions	Great for advocacy organizations while other organizations can repurpose as a pledge. Costs vary and there is a mid to high risk associated with this option.

Optimizing Your Email Program

As you consider your approach for an email marketing program, focus on a process that involves education, engagement, and asking for a gift.



Use newsletters and planned giving to educate donors on the mission of your organization and provide periodic updates on your achievements.

When engaging with your supporters think about using advocacy, polls or surveys, videos, games or contests, and events as different ways to reach them. Be sure to analyze the results of these options to identify those that work best with your donors.

One time gift appeals and sustainer invitations are examples of ways to ask for a gift from your donors.

Best Practices for Copy

How you write your copy is just as important as what you say. The table below identifies best practices you can use and includes a description of each practice.

Best Practice	Description
Scan	Use bold, different colors, bullet lists to get phrases to jump out to the readers' eyes.
Personalization	Use the supporter's first name (email is one-to-one and personal) and look for other personalization opportunities such as state or city.
5th Grade Reading Level	Short words, short sentences, short paragraphs. Big blocks of text are intimidating. Allow your reader to speed through your copy to get to the action you want them to take.
Single Call to Action	Get to the point of the ONE thing they can do today and repeat it many times in your email. Be sure to give them many opportunities to click through to the page where they can act.
P.S.	This is one of the most read parts of the message so use it to your advantage.
Donor Centric Language	Make your donor the hero. You the donor fed hungry children. You the donor saved puppies from the kill shelter. You the donor gave veterans a hand up. Not "we" the organization. Avoid the trap of "you helped us" – that still gives the organization credit rather than the donor.

Best Practices for Design

Design is another important aspect to consider and establishes the format for your message. The table below identifies the best practices for designing your emails and includes a description of each practice.

Best Practice	Description
Branding	Your emails should clearly be from you based on your consistent use of a recognizable brand.
Images	Use compelling images where eyes are focused to the camera.
Font	Research is available to help you identify which easy to read fonts work best for emails.
White Space	White space provides breaks up text and graphics to make the message less cramped, confusing, or overwhelming.
Mobile Responsiveness	Your emails should look good on desktops, tablets, and mobile phones. Use tricks like display: none; to hide elements that don't need to be shown on mobile. Links and buttons should be a minimum of 44 x 44 pixels so they are easily tap-able.
Bullet Proof Buttons	Many people don't turn images on in emails, so your colorful button that you want people to click on may not show up. You can use coding to build a "button" so everyone will see your call to action even if images are turned off.

Industry Benchmarks

Industry benchmarks are important to know and measure against, but you should also maintain your own reporting and constantly be looking to improve against that.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Nonprofit Industry Standard for Fundraising Emails*	Tests to Try
Open Rate	14%	Subject line From line Time of send Targeting/Segmentation
Click Through Rate	0.43%	Call to action Layout Content/Copy direction Images, Video
Donation Rate	0.06%	Call to action Urgency of copy
Page Completion Rate	15%	Layout Imagery Copy
Average Gift	\$68 one time \$18 monthly	Ask string Incentives/premium offers

Identify where you are falling short and then determine the test you want to conduct to move the needle. Too many organizations get trapped in the habit of not doing any testing beyond subject lines.

Optimizing Your Donation Pages

Online donation pages require planning to ensure your message is clear, easy to read, and personal. The following table identifies best practices for designing your online donation pages.

Best Practice	Description
Make it Easy	Your pages should be bright, colorful, and focused to eliminate any distractions for friction. Minimize page navigation and remove unnecessary data fields.
Make it Personal	Pre-populate fields when possible, use dynamic ask strings, and insert the donor's name and gift amount on a button.
Make it Mobile Responsive	Because 1 in 7 donors give on a mobile device you should eliminate large images and keep the copy short and to the point. Use tap-friendly buttons and easy to complete fields.

Best Practice	Description
Test! Test! Test!	Test your ask string to determine if low-to-high or high-to-low and round numbers or odd amounts provide better results. Test images such as boy or girl and old or young and trust seals like Charity Navigator or Verisign.
Don't Forget the Confirmation Page	Remember these are your BEST people and they just made a gift to your organization! Make them feel good and help them share how good they feel about your organization.