

DIGITAL MARKETING

For The Modern Nonprofit



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INTRODUCTION:

How Digital Marketing Connects You To Those Who Care Most



What Is Digital Marketing, And Why Should I Care?

Your programs create an incredible impact in the world. But do people know about them? Do those who care about your cause find you and become donors?

Digital marketing helps you find and nourish relationships with the people who care most. Let's look at what it is and why it's so effective.

Digital marketing is anything you do online to

Attract new audience members.

Convert audience members into donors, volunteers, and/or members.

Engage current supporters, encouraging loyalty and advocacy.

This includes channels such as search engines, email, social media, and your own website.

While traditional marketing tactics such as public relations and print media advertisement can still be effective, digital has several huge advantages:

- It allows you to target very specific audiences
- It meets your audiences where they spend most time: the average American spends 6.2 hours online every day, including nearly two hours (approximately 116 minutes) on social media alone
- It is a network, allowing your message to spread beyond your own contact list
- It doesn't require a big budget to have a big impact
- It provides real-time feedback so you can understand what does and doesn't work for your audience. This is especially helpful for nonprofits who want to get the most bang for their (limited) buck

Isn't Digital Marketing a Luxury?

Have you ever heard of a nonprofit that didn't wish it had more time, more money, and more people to balance all the demands its work requires? Many nonprofits who'd like to expand their marketing efforts put it off because it seems too expensive, takes too much time, or feels overwhelming.

Before succumbing to the myth that marketing can be done only by those with deep technical knowledge and big budgets, keep in mind that marketing plans can be tailored to fit any company or project. While digital marketing won't solve all your fundraising challenges, it's an essential part of your fundraising arsenal. Creating a marketing infrastructure to support your fundraising campaigns will lead to increased engagement and donations.

This guide will help you choose the tactics that will make a difference for you. Before you can choose tactics, though, you need to create a strategy. If you're working with limited resources, an objective-first strategy will save you money and help you raise more money long-term. By implementing a strategy, you'll be able to notice when things aren't working and course-correct. This makes digital marketing an efficient investment of time and money for most organizations.



KEY DEFINITIONS

Objective - Your overall goal

Strategy - A plan for reaching your objective

Tactic - The means you use to reach your objective

Key Performance Indicator (KPI) -

A metric to track the success of your chosen tactic(s)

Channel - The avenue you use to deliver your marketing message

CREATING A STRATEGY:

Setting Yourself Up To Succeed



The Benefits of an Objective-First Strategy

Is “throw it on the wall and see if it sticks” your go-to strategy (also known as “spray and pray” and “shooting in the dark”)? How’s it working for you? You’ve probably hit the target a few times, but do you have a reliable way of comparing the effectiveness of each tactic you deploy? How do you know what you’re doing is the best way to achieve your goals?

If you haven’t created a strategy yet, you’re not alone! The good news is that you can start now, and that in doing so you’ll be ahead of the game. Taking the time to create a framework, strategy, and budget saves time and money long-term.

Please don’t skip this part! In this guide, we will use an objective-first framework to help you put your goals front-and-center. Once we have our objective, we’ll choose our tactic(s). And of course, we can’t track success without determining the KPIs for each.



$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{BENEFITS} - \text{COST}}{\text{COST}} \times 100$$

One challenge that many nonprofits have is that they don’t know the benefits (revenue) or costs of their marketing efforts. If this is you, take some time to sketch it out: How many hours of staff time do you spend each month on marketing? How much does that cost per hour? Can you tie any of this effort directly to the revenue you’ve made?

When you know how much time and money you’re spending on marketing, you can calculate your Return on Investment - or, in layman’s terms, your “bang for your buck.”

Do you know what ROI your marketing efforts are currently fetching? Use the formula above to establish a baseline number.

Step 1: Set Your Objective

You probably have a lot of goals...

Just choose **one!**

At least to start. When it comes to digital marketing, people tend to jump from one shiny object to the next. They never focus on any plan long enough to see any results. In fact, they often don't even know the result they are looking for!

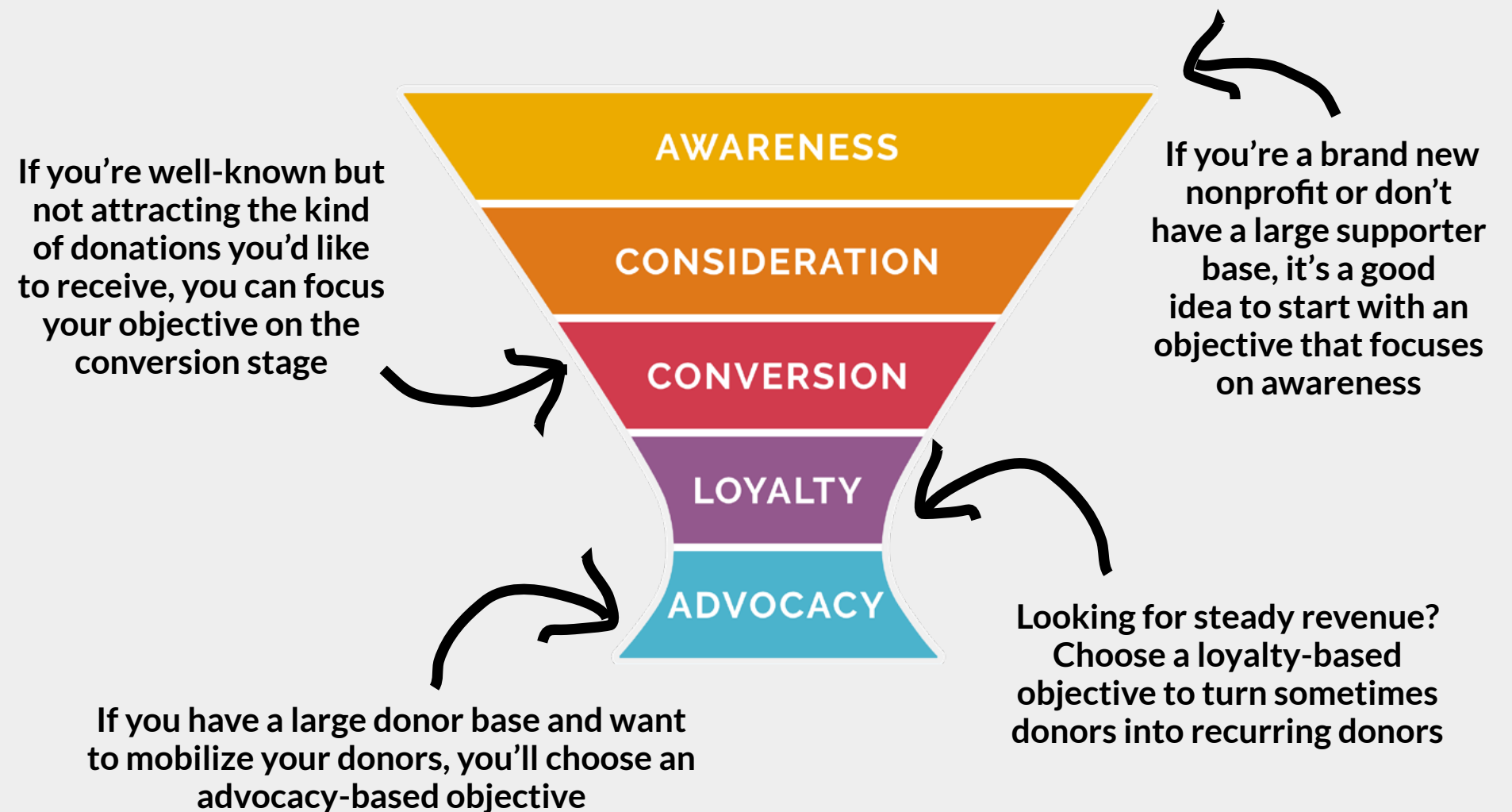
By choosing one objective for your team to focus on, all your tactics can work in alignment with each other.

That focus will help you achieve your objective so that you can choose a new one!

THE MARKETING FUNNEL

This Marketing Funnel is a generalization of the stages people go through in discovering and choosing to support your organization. The funnel shape indicates the relative number of people who will go through each stage. Of all the people who learn about your organization (**awareness**), a smaller number will want to learn more (**consideration**). Of those, an even smaller number will choose to donate (**conversion**). Of those, some will become regular donors (**loyalty**). A select few rockstars will become your staunchest allies, fundraising on your behalf (**advocacy**).

Your objective will likely be tied to a stage on this funnel.



Set a SMART Objective

Objectives are outcome goals for your staff or department. Focus on an objective that translates directly into ROI for your organization, and make it SMART! SMART objectives get very specific about what you want to do and when you want to accomplish it by. This allows you to measure and report on your success over time.

Examples of goals that aren't SMART:

- "Raise awareness of Mutttopia"
- "Be a thought leader in our field"
- "Gain Facebook followers"

These goals are difficult to measure and report on. They also indicate no clear return on your marketing investment.



SAMPLE OBJECTIVES

EXAMPLE 1:

Camp Wonder is a summer camp for low-income youth in Los Angeles, San Diego, and Santa Barbara. It's been around for ten years and has a substantial email list, but wants to increase awareness in the community beyond just camp attendees in order to increase participant and volunteer sign-ups long-term.

Camp Wonder's objective is to increase unique website visits by 25% each quarter this fiscal year

EXAMPLE 2:

Mutttopia, a dog rescue in Nashville, has a large network of supporters who have adopted dogs from them in the past. Mutttopia wants to leverage this network to increase donations to their work.

In order to support its growing program, Muttville's objective is to convert 10% of one-time donors into monthly donors over the next 6 months.

Step 2: Set Your Objective-Level KPIs

Now that you've set your objective, you'll want to track it.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are metrics used to check whether you are on track to meet your objectives. KPIs are often tracked weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Tracking them consistently allows you to course-correct along the way toward meeting your goals.

There are always a lot of metrics you can track at any given time, but why waste time tracking them all? "Key" is the key word here.

In some cases, there may not be a single metric that gives you all the information you need. In this case, you will need to choose two key metrics and do some math to get the final results of your efforts.

What are the 1-2 most important metrics to keep track of as you work toward your goals?



SAMPLE KPIS

EXAMPLE 1:

Camp Wonder's objective is to increase unique website visits by 25% each quarter this fiscal year

KPI: Unique Website Visits

EXAMPLE 2:

In order to support its growing program, Muttopia's objective is to convert 10% of one-time donors into monthly donors over the next 6 months.

KPI: % Recurring Donors

This metric is hard to find on a dashboard, so Muttopia will need to divide the number of monthly donors by the number of total donors to find the ratio

Step 3: Define Your Audience

It doesn't matter how many Facebook followers you have if none of them will ever donate, volunteer, or spread the word. Smart marketing is about reaching a specific target of people whose values intersect with your nonprofit's unique ability to address a community need.

A Donor Persona is a way to describe and visualise the people you are trying to engage with, whether in a marketing effort or in a fundraising campaign. It's a way to personalize segments of your target market and help you experience your brand through their eyes so you can tailor your message to their needs.

Take some time to create 2-3 donor personas that represent significant segments of your community. You will need to do some research.

CREATING PERSONAS

Your personas will include information such as demographics, communication preference, and familiarity with your nonprofit. Start with the data you already have from your donor database. If you use Google Analytics, you might be able to find some helpful demographic data there as well.

Next, gather qualitative data. Call up a few donors and ask them questions:

- How do they personally connect with your mission?
- What brought them to the organization, and what will inspire them to stay?
- How do they want to be communicated with?
- What do they want to know about your cause?

There are endless ways to segment your supporters. We recommend creating segments based on behaviors - who's most likely to take action in a way that will support your objective? This will also help you figure out your negative personas - types of people you should avoid focusing on because they are unlikely to give.

For example, if you're a nonprofit supporting people with Alzheimer's, you may get less reward from marketing to millennials (even if they seem like a hot new market). Instead, you might focus on middle-aged individuals who have a parent with Alzheimer's. They're likely to be personally invested in the cause **and** they probably have more money to give.

Your Donor Personas are living documents. As you receive more data about your supporters, update and refine your personas.

How To Use Donor Personas

When creating digital content & campaigns, always have your personas in mind. Who are you reaching out to, and how can your language address their needs?

For example, if many of your supporters are seniors with grandchildren, show how their donation will help all children. You may also consider using a larger font size. If you are speaking to busy working professionals, you might consider engaging with them on evenings or weekends, or reminding them how quick and easy it is to donate.

Don't try to reach people who don't fit into your personas! **When you try to capture anyone and everyone, your message becomes diluted.**



EXAMPLE: MOLLY THE MILLENNIAL

Age: 28

Education Level: Bachelor's Degree

Marital Status: Single

Preferred Media: Instagram, Medium

Preferred Format: Smartphone

Income Level: \$45k

BEHAVIORS

- Easily distracted
- Technology Early Adopter
- Juggles Multiple jobs with active social life and an active lifestyle
- Prefers to rent and share (home, movies, music, car) over ownership
- Frequently checks social media

FRUSTRATIONS

- Inauthenticity, sales and classic advertising
- Delayed gratification - waiting for anything
- Difficult-to-comprehend websites or content, needs things to be easy and fast
- Social injustice
- Poor customer service

MOTIVATIONS

- Contribution and meaning, rewarding experiences
- Creative fulfillment
- Being an influencer/looking good in front of peers
- Being unique

[Click here for a Donor Persona Template!](#)

Step 4: Choose Your Tactics

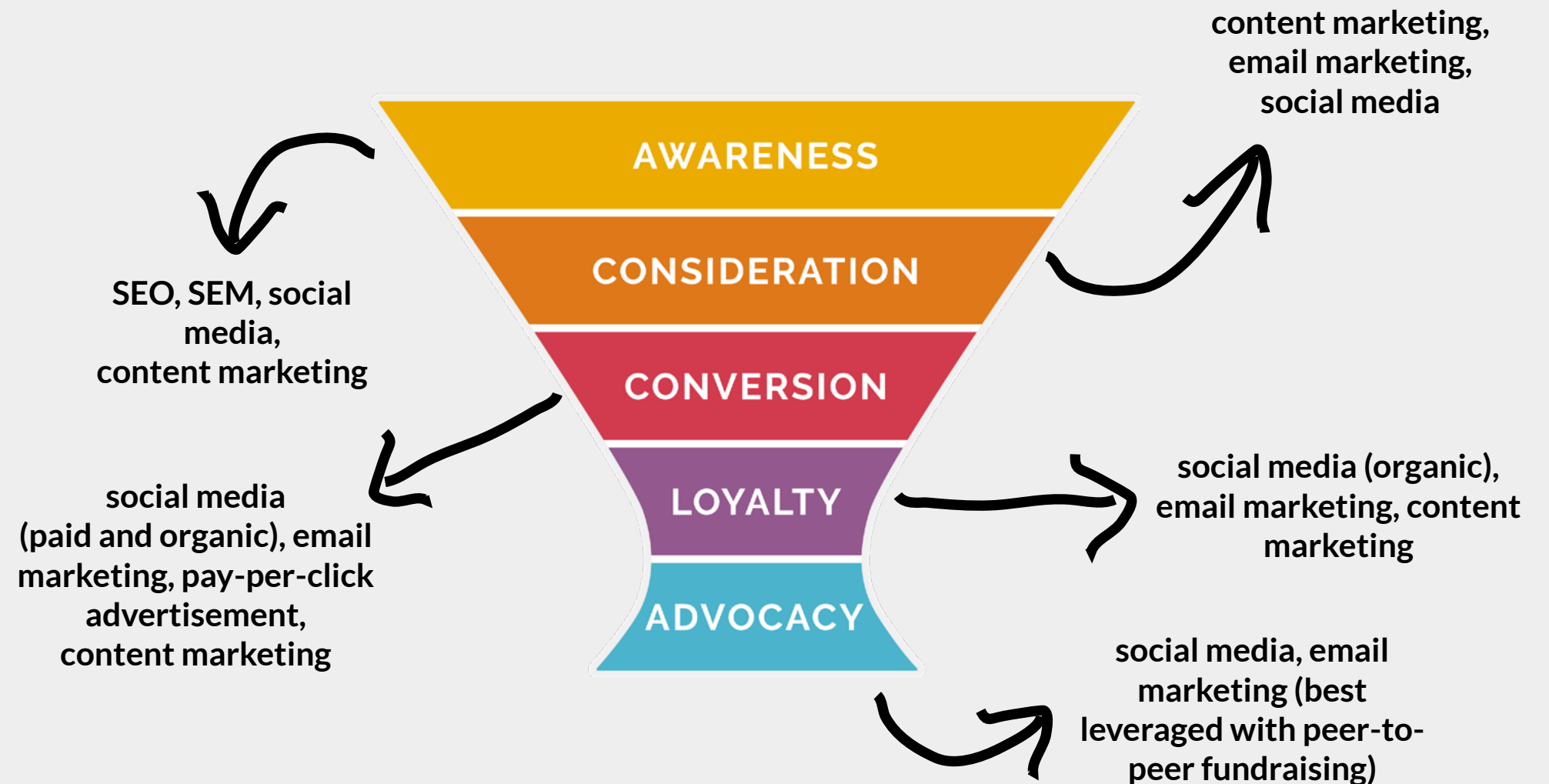
Now that you've set your objective and know who your audience is (and who it isn't!), you can start implementing your tactics. In this guide, we've included overviews of the most common digital marketing tactics:

- Content marketing
 - Blogging
 - SEO
- Email marketing
- Organic social media
- PPC (Pay-Per-Click) advertising
 - Google AdWords
 - Facebook advertising

As you read through the next few pages of options, keep your objective in mind. It doesn't matter how fun a tactic seems - if it won't help you achieve your objective, don't choose it.

USING THE MARKETING FUNNEL

Where your objective lands on the Marketing Funnel will help you choose which tactics to use. For example, SEO and SEM are both discovery tools that use Google and other search engines. They're great for raising awareness, because Google is where people go to search for something new. On the other hand, email marketing isn't the best choice for awareness (since they're probably already aware of you!), but is a great way to convert people into donors.



Remember, you don't have to do everything! Some tactics will work better than others for you, and some might not work at all. If you try to do too many things, you will do none of them well. Start with one or two tactics, and no more than three. This doesn't mean you can't explore other tactics in the future, but it does give you a focused starting point.

DIGITAL MARKETING TACTICS:

Put Your Strategy Into Action



Content Marketing

Content refers to text, images, videos, and infographics that tell your story. Content is valuable for many reasons:

- It's **shareable**: This is the stuff your supporters will use to spread the word. When something goes “viral” online, that's because it's valuable content that people want to share. Your supporters will not magically do the work for you - you have to create some messaging and content for them to share.
- It's **flexible**: Content can be reused across all of your sharing platforms. It can be cut up, edited, and recycled to fit the specific campaign or platform you're using.
- It's **powerful**: Content is how you create your organization's voice and brand. Through content, you can be a reliable, recognizable resource for people wanting to learn about your cause.

“Content Marketing” as a tactic refers to creating and using content strategically to reach your objective. Email marketing and social media marketing are both forms of content marketing, but we've given them their own sections. For this section, we're going to focus on content that lives on your website, which includes your webpages and your blog. We've separated it because this type of content serves an important secondary purpose: it helps you show up on Google searches.



In A Nutshell:

Producing content that people find valuable will help them discover, support, and become loyal to your cause

Common Blogging KPIs:

- Page views
- Bounce rate
- Shares
- Link clicks

Common SEO KPIs:

- # or % of visitors referred by Google

The Honeycomb of Value

How do you create content that others will find compelling?

For all content creation - whether it's blogging, email marketing, or advertising - you'll want to use the Honeycomb of Value as a guide.

Any time you're creating something you want people to read or look at, make sure it meets at least two of these qualities!



Content Marketing 101: Blogging

Blogs can have a huge impact on how people find your website, learn more about you, and decide if you're trustworthy. When done well, they provide incredibly high ROI (even without subscribers). Blogs are useful for an array of reasons:

- Attract people to your website
- Provide valuable information
- Establish yourself as a leader in your industry
- Rise in search engine ranking
- Serve as a "home base" for content you create, which can be shared across other channels such as email and social media, linking people back to your website

That said, blogs are not a solution for everyone. Before starting a blog, consider your capacity to publish high quality content **consistently**. If you're not providing value to your audience and donor personas, no one will read it!

If you know you have quality content you can produce, but are unsure of where you'll find the time to write and maintain a blog, here are a few ideas:

- Ask staff members, including program staff, to contribute. Having perspectives from across your agency gives your supporters an in-depth look. Find a small handful of people who are strong writers and are willing to contribute on a regular basis.
- Reuse content you've created for other purposes, including brochures and your website. You'll want to expand on it, but you won't have to start from scratch.
- Prioritize quality over quantity. Although it's great to publish often, do what you can with what you have without sacrificing quality.



BLOG CONTENT TIPS

- Tie donor actions to numbers
- Tell and share personal stories
- Provide research and information on your field of expertise
- Thank constituents
- Share recent photos and videos
- Repurpose evergreen content. In addition to (or instead of) creating an FAQ page for your website, create blog posts that answer some of the most common questions you receive. Or, create a post that explains terms used in your field or develop a post that lists other resources, bloggers or experts.

How To Get Started With Blogging

If you choose blogging as a tactic, there are a few steps you should take to ensure your plan ties back to your strategic objective.

1. Gather your crew of core contributors for a launch meeting.
2. Brainstorm a list of topics to write about. Among the group, choose the best ideas and assign them between your writers.
3. Create a publishing calendar to ensure a consistent stream of content

Although you'll have a calendar to work from, keep space open for last-minute posts that reflect current events. For example, if you're a homelessness advocacy organization, you might publish about a special election proposition that affects your target population and why voters should vote a certain way.


Make sure to come up with a good system for editing your posts. Besides a good ol' fashioned read-through by multiple people, you can use free web browser apps such as [Hemingway](#) and the [Grammarly](#) to catch any grammatical or stylistic errors.

[Click here for a Content Calendar Template!](#)

BLOG TIPS

Blog posts should always have a call to action. This can either be a big contrasting button or a simple ask with a link. Make sure your call to action aligns with your objective!

high contrast
call to action
button

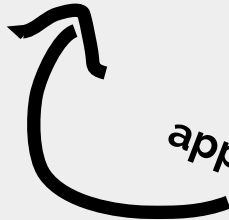


Support Muttopia!

“Muttopia is proud to be funded by hundreds of dog-loving community members like you. For each \$50 you give today, we can feed and shelter one dog for a month.”

“Thanks to our generous donors, Camp Wonder offers scholarships to 96% of its campers. To support a camper's life-changing summer, click here to donate.”

emotional
appeal to action



Content Marketing 201: SEO

You can set up your website and content in a way that search engines will prioritize you in their rankings. This is called Search Engine Optimization, or SEO.

Search engines use bots to scan and analyze your web pages, and rank these using a combination of factors. The most relevant and rich content gets rewarded and placed at the top. What makes your website relevant and rich? Quality content, relevant keywords, and site linking.

Quality Content:

Professional, easy-to-read, typo-free writing encourages readers to stay on your site. This is important because Google tracks your “bounce rate” - the percentage of readers who ditch your site right away. Quality also inspires trust among your readers, leading them to return to your website as a resource.

Relevant Keywords:

A keyword is what a person types into the search box. If you want people to find your post, you’ll want to include the exact keywords they’re looking for in your titles and text body.

Site Linking:

Another factor in your rankings is how “popular” you are. If other sites link to you, that shows search engines you’re trustworthy. Blog posts are much more linkable than something like your “About Us” page. This is another reason creating quality content is important: if your blog posts are providing value to your visitors, they’re more likely to link to your posts from their own sites. One way to speed up this process is to ask partner organizations to link to you.

Choosing The Right Keywords

1. What core topics would you like to be known for? Pick relevant keywords for these niche topics.
2. Use [Google’s keyword planner tool](#) to see related terms people are searching for. This reveals your opportunities - keywords being searched but pulling up scarce content.
3. Aim for long-tail keywords - longer, more specific search queries. When someone wants to take action they are likely be specific. For example, “how to support dog rescue Nashville.”
4. Build your content strategy and calendar around these keywords.

Additional Resources

If you are interested in learning more about SEO and some of the other strategies it covers, [check out this 45 minute overview video](#).

Consider hiring a professional to review your current site and content and make recommendations for optimization. If you do not have an SEO expert in your network, try searching for freelancers on [UpWork](#) and [Fiverr](#).

Email Marketing

Email marketing may not seem very modern or revolutionary, but despite all the newfangled ways of reaching people these days, email consistently continues to deliver the best Return on Investment (ROI) for many organizations.

Email marketing reaches the people who've already expressed some baseline interest in what you do. These are important people! They're way more likely to donate than a stranger on the street. Email marketing is easy, targeted, and full of rich data that will help you learn about them.



In A Nutshell:

Email marketing helps you reach people who've already expressed interest in what you do to connect with them and encourage them to take action.

Common KPIs:

- Opens
- Click through rate
- Emails sent

How To Measure:

All email service providers provide reporting on your email campaigns. If you are using MailChimp, click on the "Reports" button at the top of the page.

Email Marketing 101: Set Up An ESP

If you aren't already, sign up for an Email Service Provider (ESP). We highly recommend using an ESP instead of Gmail or Outlook. Gmail and Outlook are not designed to send mass mailings and using them can get you marked as spam! There are a lot of ESPs out there, but we recommend [MailChimp](#) for small nonprofits.

MailChimp has many benefits:

- Free to use if you have fewer than 2,000 contacts
- User-friendly interface, making it easy to create attractive email templates
- A/B testing, which allows you to test different variations of your emails to see which versions inspire higher open- and click-rates
- Marketing automation, which uses triggers to send out automatic emails at key points (such as when a new donor joins your community).

MailChimp has [extensive documentation](#) on how to get set up with their product, so we will not replicate that here. We do, however, want to help you get the most out of your efforts.

Even though you're unlikely to get direct responses to the emails you send out, you should still think of them as a conversation. **Treat emails like you're going on a date: avoid babbling on and on about your accomplishments.** Your supporters already like you enough to want to receive your emails, now make them feel special! Tell them about the impact they've had on your organization, or give them ideas about how they can help. At the very least, provide them information that they will find useful or interesting.

Building Your Email List

Start by compiling your lists of past donors and other supporters and their emails. ([Here's how to pull a report from Flipcause](#)).

Hopefully, you've been collecting email addresses anytime someone donates, volunteers, attends an event, or contacts your organization. You should also include a newsletter sign-up form on your website, social media, and blogs.

Setting Up Email Templates

Unlike regular emails, marketing emails have a visual design. Your email design should reflect your brand and be clean and easy to read. MailChimp makes this easy with drag-and-drop tools. They also allow you to [create and save templates](#) that can be filled with fresh content and deployed at a moment's notice:

- Monthly updates/newsletters
- Welcome email to new donors
- Event announcements and updates
- Campaign announcements and updates
- Success stories
- Special announcements

Email Marketing 201: Advanced Tools

Mailchimp and other ESPs offer sophisticated tools including A/B Testing, list segmentation, and analytics. These tools can help you track effectiveness and increase the number of people who are opening, reading, and clicking on your emails.

If you're already sending great emails but want to step up your game a bit, here are some ways to do so:

A/B Testing

How do you know which subject line will entice the most opens? Which photo of a cute dog should you use? What should your call to action button say, and what color should it be? It's hard to guess what will be most effective - but you don't have to! A/B testing is a built-in feature of MailChimp and other email providers. It allows you to test different versions of email components on a small test batch of recipients. It then tallies which version got the best responses and automatically sends that version to the rest of your email list.

Reporting & Analytics

Another reason to use an ESP (as opposed to sending through Gmail or Outlook) is the reporting function. Email tools provide powerful insights into your reader's behavior and allow you to modify your messaging accordingly. You can even generate a list of people who didn't open, and send them a different campaign!

List Segmentation

While there will be some emails you'll want to send to everyone on your email list, you'll want to target others. List segmentation allows you to upload multiple subscriber lists according to all sorts of criteria. Each of your supporters can appear on multiple lists. They'll never receive more than one copy of an email.

The more targeted the lists can get, the more people will feel like you're speaking directly to them. The more people feel like you're speaking directly to them, the more likely they'll take action.

Here are some examples of how organizations might use list segmentation:

- After their camp programming ended for the year, Camp Wonder sent separate emails to residents of each of the three cities they serve. Each email showed how many children in that city Camp Wonder helped this year.
- For their end of year appeal, Muttville sent separate emails to people who've adopted dogs and financial supporters. While everyone was asked to give, adopters received well wishes for them and their pets in the new year, and donors received a graphic showing how many dogs their gift had helped.

Social Media

Most nonprofits have a Facebook page, if not one or two other social media accounts, that they use primarily as a communication channel. They reuse content from other sources, create Facebook events, and respond to supporter questions. This level of engagement is great, but it's not an effective way to get followers to become supporters.

If you're wondering if you should use social media as a marketing tactic to meet your objective, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- **What value does this provide?**

Social media on its own does not drive hard quantifiable value. Having a lot of followers is only valuable if they have the potential to be supporters or influencers (i.e., they share with their friends).

- **Do I have great content that people will want to see and read?**

Your success on social media will only be as good as your content is. There is no magic formula for creating "viral" or popular content. Instead, successful organizations focus on consistently publishing relevant information their audiences care about.

- **Do I have visual media?**

Many social media networks - especially Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and Pinterest - rely on beautiful visual content. In a world of infinite distractions vying for attention, if you don't have visually captivating pictures or videos to post, you'll struggle to gain momentum on these platforms.



In A Nutshell:

Social media helps you connect with your community, but it can be hard to build a worthwhile following and see a return on your investment. Having a unique voice will help you succeed.

Common KPIs:

- Post Likes
- Post Shares
- New followers
- Link clicks

How To Measure:

Each social media platform has an analytics dashboard that provides basic data on your page and followers

Organic Social Media

“Organic” refers to using social media without paying for it. (To learn more about paid social media and buying advertisements, see [page 29](#).)

In January of 2018, Facebook announced a change to its algorithm to further prioritize friends and family in your newsfeed. This is good for users, who want content they care about. From a nonprofit’s perspective, though, it can make things difficult. Before the announcement, an average post on a nonprofit’s page would be seen by only 2-6% of their audience. This small number might continue to go down with the changes, making it hard to get your message out there.

Because of this, if you choose to use social media as a tactic, you’ll need to take a different approach than just posting arbitrarily on Facebook and hoping people like it. Here’s how some organizations approach this challenge:

Create a unique, valuable online voice or campaign

Take a moment to think about your favorite pages on Facebook or Instagram. What do you like about them?

One incredibly popular Facebook page is [Humans of New York](#), which features the portraits and intimate thoughts of the many diverse people living in the city, captured in interview format. Another

great feed is the [National Forest Foundation](#) Twitter, which features gorgeous wildlife photos and facts they know their followers will connect to. Both of these pages found a specific type of post that worked well for them and stuck to it. They refrain from boring updates or talking solely about themselves. Their followers know what to expect and love what they receive.

Some organizations have a charismatic leader who can be the “voice” of a nonprofit on Twitter or LinkedIn. Some use content generated by their audience or focus on featuring the clients they’re helping. Whatever you decide to do, create something your audience will come back to again and again.

Choose a platform other than Facebook

Facebook is a tough place to get traction if you’re not paying for it. Check out our overview of the most popular social media platforms on the next page. Depending on your audience, there may be a lot more potential for capturing a certain audience on one of them.

Whatever platform you choose, dedicate yourself fully to it. This means that you should do more than just post content. Connect with others, join groups, tag partners, and respond to comments.

Social Media Cheat Sheet



Facebook

Used for: Connecting with friends and family, event invites, news and information

Used by: Almost everyone (1.6 billion people and counting!)

Best for: Most nonprofits



Instagram

Used for: Visual inspiration, connecting with friends and family, storytelling

Used by: Everyone except people 65+; leans female and millennial

Best for: Nonprofits with strong visual media content (i.e. animal orgs, art museums, etc)



Twitter

Used for: Industry networking, news and information

Used by: Professionals, activists, thought leaders; college educated people under 50

Best for: Networking, public relations (most journalists are on Twitter), advocacy organizations, nonprofit leaders



Snapchat

Used for: Storytelling, connecting with friends and family

Used by: Teens and young adults

Best for: Forward-thinking nonprofits trying to connect with young people; nonprofits with strong story or visual content



LinkedIn

Used for: Networking; business to business sales, professional development

Used by: College graduates aged 30-64

Best for: Advocacy organizations, hiring talent, finding volunteers, recruiting board members



Pinterest

Used for: Planning projects, visual inspiration, discovery & sharing of new content and style

Used by: Women (71%), mobile users (75%)

Best for: Nonprofits with great images to share (low-quality images won't receive traction) or products to sell

Pay-Per-Click Advertising

Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising is a way of buying visits to your site, rather than trying to “earn” visits organically. PPC ads are auctioned - you “bid” for placement and only pay if your ad is clicked. While there are many platforms that offer ads, we’ll focus on Google AdWords and Facebook Ads. These are a good “entry point” and have a high ROI potential.

Benefits of PPC:

- **It’s fast:** If you’re a new organization or have a last-minute campaign, paying for screen space will get faster results than organic (unpaid) growth.
- **It’s targeted:** You can specifically advertise to the people who matter most.
- **It’s data-driven:** You can see which versions of your ad messaging perform best.
- **It’s informative:** Learning what your audience responds well to also helps shape your overall messaging, and you can incorporate this consistently across all your content.

Drawbacks of PPC:

- **It’s not free:** That said, spending money is wise if it helps you to raise more.
- **It’s resource-heavy:** There is a learning curve and PPC needs continuous management. Hiring an expert can be worthwhile, and ensure you’re not wasting money on failing campaigns.
- **It’s unpredictable:** Unfortunately, not everyone who clicks on your ad will convert into a supporter. You still have to pay for their click whether they did it accidentally or purposely. This is why it’s important to set up your ads thoughtfully and target them carefully.



In A Nutshell:

In a nutshell: by thinking like a business and paying for advertising, you can reach a new audience you haven’t tapped before. Pay-per-click advertising is effective but also higher risk and more complicated to set up than other tactics.

Common KPIs:

- Total ad clicks
- Cost per click (CPC)
- Click-through rate (CTR)

How To Measure:

Both Google AdWords and Facebook ads have reporting tools to help you see how many people have clicked on your ads and which ads had the highest CTR (percentage of people who saw your ad and clicked on it).

Paid Search & Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

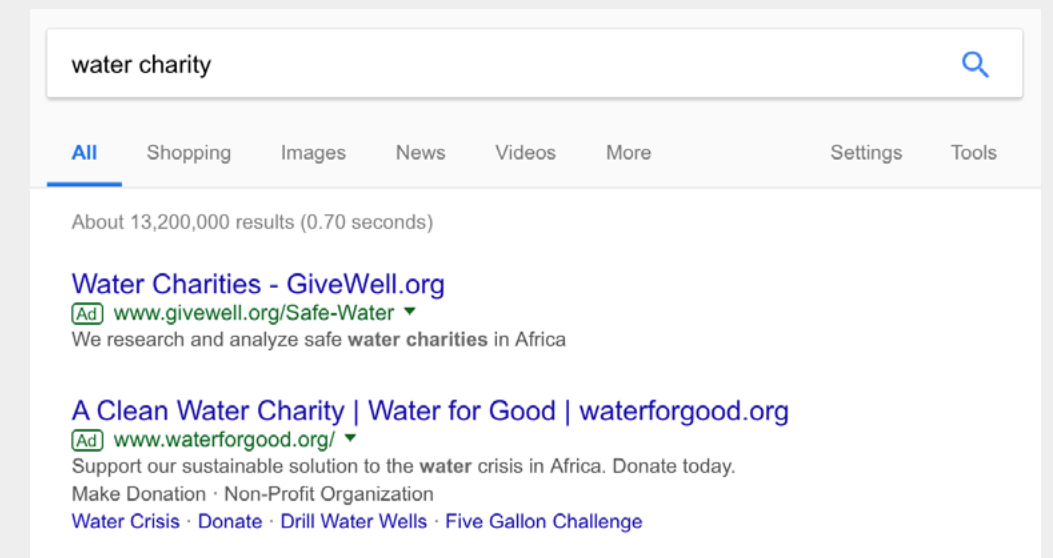
Wondering how people find you? It all starts with Google - well, almost. Ninety percent of online searches start with Google, and all of those searches come swathed in ads. You've seen them: small green "ad" indicators at the top, bottom, and sometimes side of the page. Businesses purchase this ad space through Google AdWords, a platform for publishing ads and bidding for space on Google pages.

Try Googling a few keywords related to your cause. Do you show up in the top 1-6 results? If not, people probably aren't finding you organically through Google. SEO, which we talked about on [page 19](#), is a slow but steady way to improve your rankings. Ads are the fast track to the top of search results.

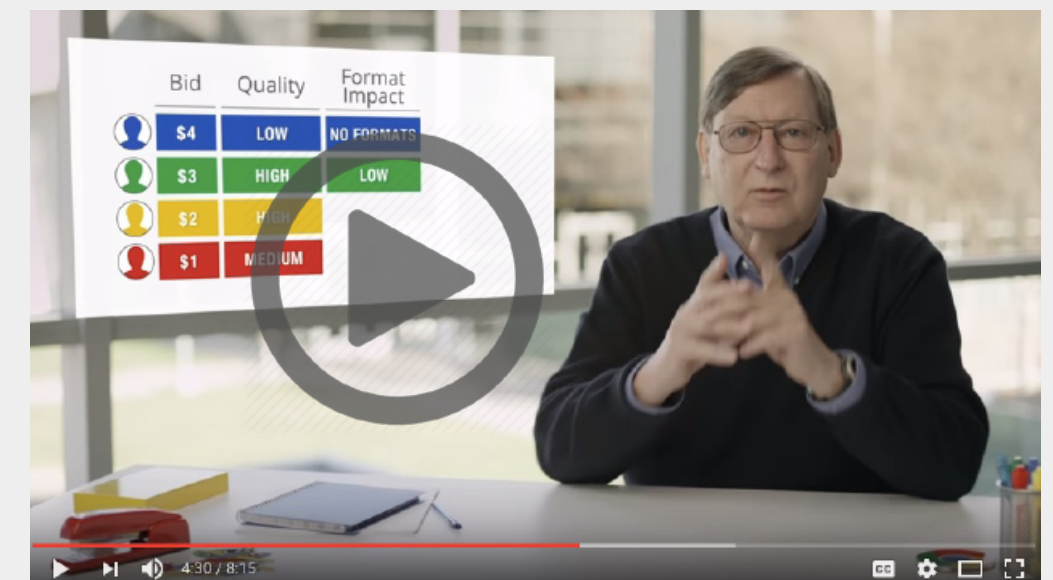
If you're thinking "wait, but we don't have money to pay for advertising," you're in luck: through their Ad Grants program, Google offers \$10,000 per month in **free** ads to qualified nonprofits.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

do you want
your name in
the top spot?



watch this video
to learn how google
chooses ads



Google AdGrants & AdWords

Google's Ad Grants program gives most registered 501(c)3 organizations \$10,000/month in AdWords credit. That's equal to \$329/day - [which is a lot of free money to play with!](#)

Of course, there are some limitations:

- This money can only be used for ads that show up on the Google search pages, and are only text-based ads (no images or videos). They can't be used for display ads, which are the Google Ads you see on other pages outside of Google's search page.
- If your click-through rate (CTR) falls below 5% in two consecutive months, your account will be suspended and risk cancellation. If your account gets cancelled, although you can reinstate it, you'll have to start from scratch and your hard work in your current account setup will be lost. (If your account is in danger of suspension, Google will send in-app notifications and offer educational resources to help improve.)
- Free nonprofit ads are placed below paid ads, so nonprofits with advertising budgets might edge you out if you're in a competitive space (even if they're only bidding \$.50 in "real" money!).
- The ads are only as good as the content they're leading to. Make sure you're giving people what they're looking for, and that there's a clear call-to-action (CTA) once they get there!

[Click here to apply for your AdWords Grant!](#)



AdWords Grant Requirements

- Hold (501(c)3) status
- Agree to AdGrant's requirements for how to receive and use donations obtained from the grant
- Have a functional website.

Ineligible Organizations

- Governmental entities and organizations
- Hospitals and medical groups
- Schools, childcare centers, academic institutions

Additional Resources

Take a look at [this guide to getting started](#) before deciding whether to use AdWords as one of your tactics. If you decide to set up Google Ad Grants, plan to budget about 10-20 hours of employee or volunteer time to complete the process. After initial setup, you'll need to maintain the account, so factor in a few hours per month in additional time.

Paid Social Media: Facebook & Instagram Ads

Facebook Ads (both Instagram and Facebook ads are managed by [Facebook Ads Manager](#)) can be incredibly impactful, but unlike Google, Facebook isn't giving them away. They also require a more advanced level of skill to set up in a way that doesn't waste money. There are three reasons why Facebook and Instagram ads are powerful:

Facebook tracks their user's movements, online and off

Advertisers can use Facebook Pixel to track a user's activity outside of Facebook to see what pages they visited. Advertisers can then "retarget" ads to the people who showed initial interest and clicked on previous ads.

Facebook knows everything about its users

Facebook knows your zip code, income bracket, and if you like Star Wars. It knows if you're about to have a baby and your political leaning. While this may feel invasive, it's very useful for advertisers. Due to this, you'll be able to target very specific groups of people (i.e. dog lovers over the age of 28 in Nashville who earn more than \$50,000 per year). Organizations can also connect their MailChimp accounts to Facebook and target ads directly at people who are already on their mailing lists.

Facebook allows you to create many versions of your ads

If you place an ad in a magazine, you only get one shot to design it. You'd better hope people who see it like it! One major advantage to Facebook ads is that you can create multiple versions of the same ad and then see which one performs the best in real time. If one version is performing poorly, you can turn it off so you don't spend any money on a bad ad. With patience and an experimental mindset, you can create highly effective ads that target the right people.

Level 101: Boosting Posts

The Boost Post button allows you to promote a post. Pick a budget, set a call to action, and select your audience. You can target specific groups, including your current followers and their friends. While limited, this is a quick and easy way to get started with Facebook advertising.

Level 201: Facebook Ads Manager

Facebook Ads Manager is a powerful platform that allows you to create multiple campaigns and versions of each to compare results. You'll receive real-time data about which copy, photos, and audiences were most effective, and turn off the ads that don't work. You can also install the Facebook Pixel, which will reveal if your ads are leading people to convert the way you intended them to.

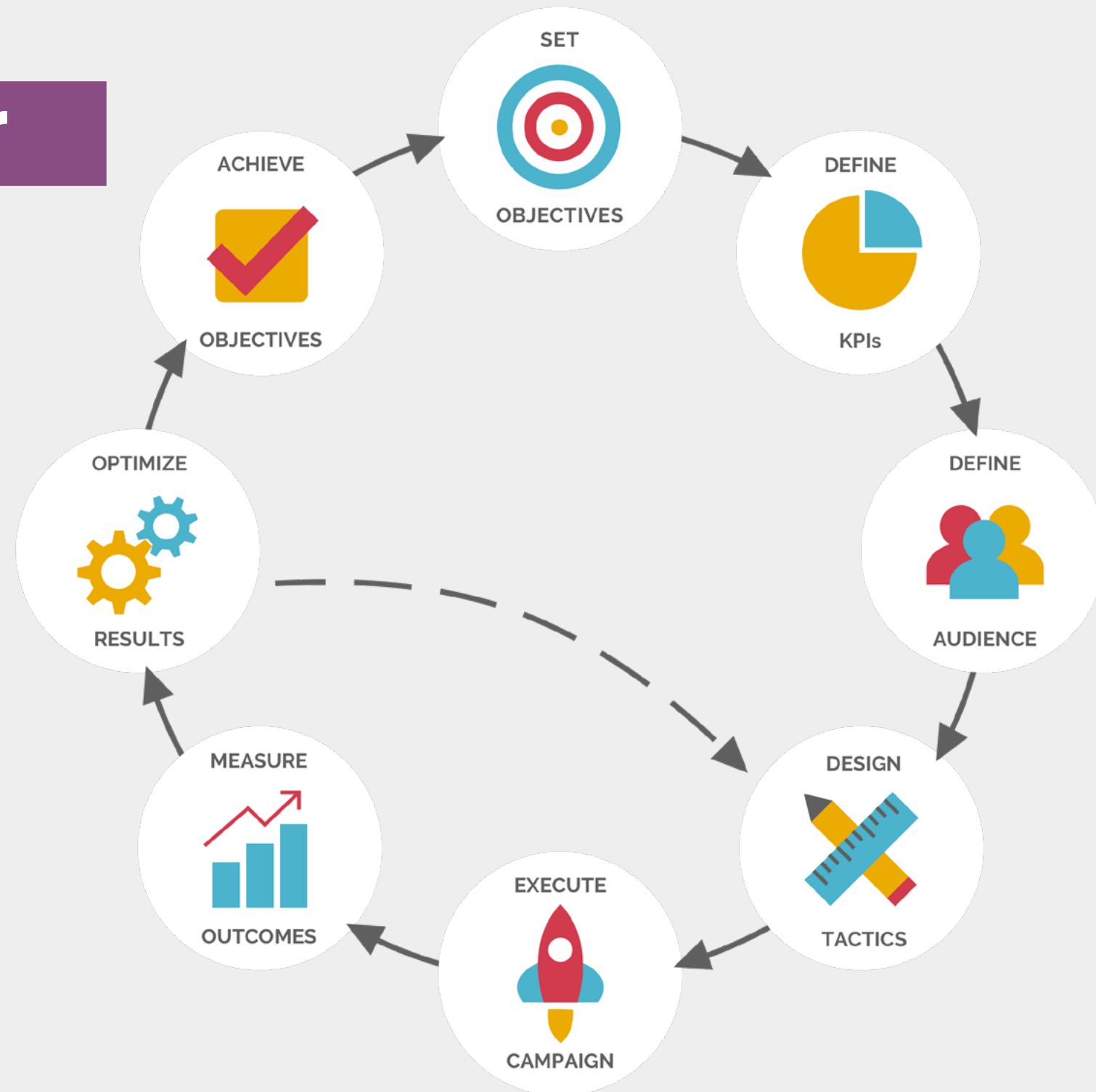
In either method, start with a small budget to experiment with. If your ads are effective, you can increase this budget. To learn more about Facebook Ads, visit their help center and watch this video on setting up a campaign.

Tying It All Together

Reminder: you don't have to do it all!

In a dream world, we'd all have enough resources to try everything. We'd have a staff member in charge of each tactic, and they'd all work in harmony to raise unprecedented funds for the causes we care about.

Until that day, let's just focus on the one or two of the tactics in this document that will get you the most bang for your buck. If all you do is start a MailChimp account and set up a few initial templates, that will be a great start!



THE DIGITAL MARKETING CYCLE

Digital Marketing is not a “set it and forget it” pursuit. It takes time, persistence, iteration, and flexibility. A well-crafted strategy will follow a life cycle that allows for making adjustments, measuring results, and re-thinking objectives. Follow this path to keep your strategy on track!

Choose Your Tactics & KPIs

Choose Your Tactics

Based on your objective, your audience, and the resources available to you, choose 1-2 tactics to focus on. If you're just starting out, begin with the "101" level of each one. If you're more established or have the resources, try for the "201" tactics.

The tactics you choose might work in cooperation with each other - for example, if you choose to launch a blog and do email marketing, you can use email as a way to notify supporters about new blog content.

Once you've chosen your tactics, create an action plan:

- **Who** will manage and be responsible for your marketing activities?
- **What** is your budget?
- **When** do you want to achieve your outcome by?
- **How** much time will you allot to each tactic per week?

Choose Your Tactic-Level KPIs

Remember our objective-first framework? Besides your main, objective-level KPI, choose one or two KPIs for each tactic. We've listed a few options for each tactic, and while it may be tempting to get creative, you'll probably want to stick with them. KPIs don't need to be clever or unique, they just need to help you measure whether you've met your goals.

Track your KPIs on a regular basis (monthly or quarterly work well). This can be set up in a simple spreadsheet so you can see results over time.

If you're seeing great results from what you're working on, awesome! Continue to create what's working for you. If you're not seeing the growth you were hoping for, consider tweaking your strategy or bring in some help to get you on the right track. Remember that some tactics will take more time to show results than others, and that marketing is not a cut-and-dry process. It's fine to change plans if the one you have isn't working for you!

Sample Strategies

MUTTOPIA

Mutttopia has a lot of supporters, including the hundreds of people who've adopted dogs from them. They chose to focus on inspiring donor loyalty by focusing on converting one-time donors (including dog adopters) into monthly donors.

Mutttopia chose email marketing as a tactic because it allows them to directly contact their current supporters and make the case for ongoing support. Mutttopia will also use social media advertising, which allows them to upload their list of supporters and target them directly.

OBJECTIVE: Convert 10% of existing donors into monthly recurring donors in the next 6 months.	
OBJECTIVE-LEVEL KPI: # of monthly donors / total donors = % recurring donors	
TACTIC: Email Marketing	TACTIC: Social Media Advertising
KPI: Click-Through Rate	KPI: Conversion Rate

CAMP WONDER

Camp Wonder wants to raise awareness of their work, so they have chosen to focus on web traffic.

In order to increase traffic, they will sign up for a Google AdWords grant and target people in the three cities they operate in. They also plan to create a blog focusing on the benefits of summer camp for kids. They hypothesize that the blog will help attract traffic from people interested in supporting summer camps. Camp Wonder will look at the traffic they get from the blog to see where people are finding them and what information draws the most people in.

OBJECTIVE: Increase unique website visits by 25% each quarter this fiscal year.	
OBJECTIVE-LEVEL KPI: Unique Website Visits	
TACTIC: Google AdWords	TACTIC: Content Marketing (Blog)
KPI: Click-Through Rate	KPI: # of visitors from each traffic source

Marketing Strategy + Fundraising Campaigns = \$\$

This document has focused on helping you create a long-term digital marketing strategy based on your goals. Remember that this strategy is just one part of your overall fundraising success!

Digital marketing is powerful tool for promoting your fundraising campaigns, including events, end-of-year campaigns, peer-to-peer campaigns and cause awareness campaigns.

Your digital strategy is the series of actions you take to help you achieve your overarching marketing goal. Your digital fundraising campaigns are building blocks or actions within your strategy that move you toward meeting that goal. Think of campaigns as a way to turbo-boost your everyday marketing operations.

For more resources on fundraising successfully, including articles on [peer-to-peer fundraising](#), [end-of-year appeals](#), and [events](#), check out our blog at [The Modern Nonprofit](#). Visit us at [Flipcause.com](#) to learn more about how to make your fundraising and donor management easier.

