



Five Steps for Donor Development

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Donor development means creating and sustaining authentic connections with those supporting your nonprofit. By nurturing these relationships, you can build a strong, engaged donor community and help ensure your organization's long-term financial stability. Donor development is crucial to nonprofits, and it's the responsibility of all members of your organization, starting with senior leadership.

When evaluating your organization's donor development programs, consider these five steps.

- Identify potential supporters.
- Build authentic relationships.
- Create engagement opportunities.
- Encourage continued support.
- And leverage technology.

To identify potential donors, research the people, corporations, and organizations that align with your mission. One way to start is by consulting with your current supporters. Volunteers have the potential to be great donors as they see firsthand not only the impact of the work your organization does, but also how well it's run. Sometimes, volunteers want to give their time and talent as a path towards later financial support. Community events, social media, and local fundraisers are also great tools to find more supporters.

To build authentic relationships, personalize your approach to each new donor or donor group by working to understand their unique interests and motivations.



Regular communication is important. Keep donors and potential donors well informed with periodic updates about your actions and impact. Invite them to events, offer behind the scenes tours, and show them how their contributions make a real difference.

Remember that potential donors may prefer different methods of communication, with some preferring email or social media and others a newsletter or personal note. Having several ways to engage with donors is another piece of the puzzle. Create in person and virtual volunteer opportunities. Or ask donors to participate on an advisory board. Recognize their contributions publicly through newsletters, social media, or at events. Your gratitude will strengthen their connection to your cause.

To encourage continued support, regularly provide donors with clear information about how their contributions are being used. Transparency builds trust. Consider a donor recognition program to honor long-term supporters and major contributors.

And last, leverage technology. Use donor management software to track interactions, preferences, and donation history. This data can help you tailor your communications and engagement strategies.

Above all, you need to make it easy for donors to give. Have you explained your ability to receive non-cash gifts? Do you clearly state that you welcome gifts of stock by donor-advised funds or qualified charitable distributions? If not, how could you improve your donor education materials? Remember, donor development is a continuous process.

These steps help endowments and foundations create a sustainable donor base, ensuring that your organization thrives long into the future. Want to assess your current donor development programs? Call CAPTRUST. We're here to help.

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