

CHRISTMAS

31

The Comprehensive Guide to

Maximize Your Online Fundraising

During the

Last Week of the Year

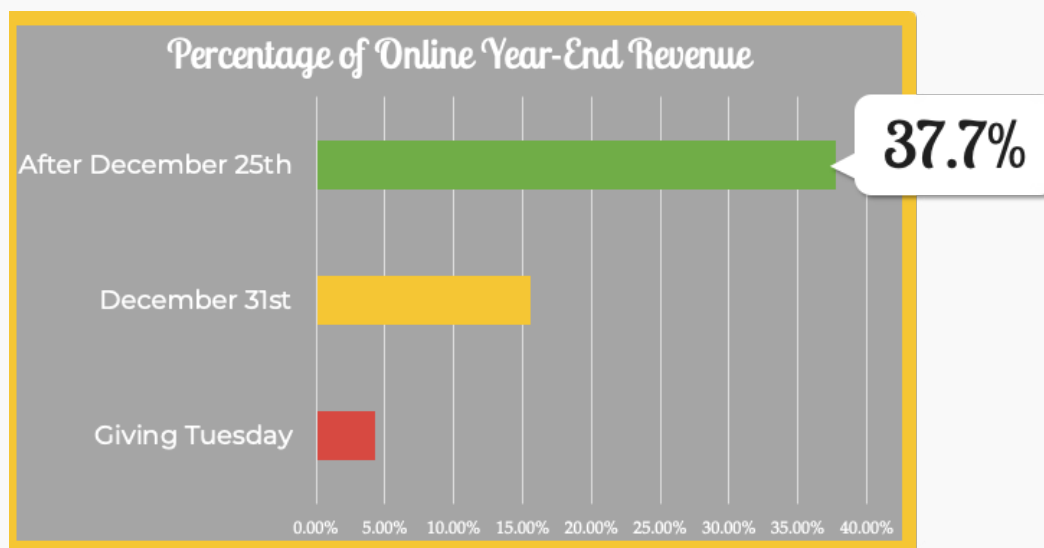


Why is the last week of the year so important?

If you only looked at how nonprofits spend most of their efforts during year-end fundraising season, you might think that Giving Tuesday is the most important giving day of the year.

However, the data tells a different story.

- Giving Tuesday brings in **4.3%** of online year-end revenue.
- December 31st brings in **15.5%** of online year-end revenue.
- The last week of the year as a whole brings in **37%** of online year-end revenue.



What you'll get from this eBook

I'm not sure if you've even started your year-end fundraising campaign. Maybe you went all-in on Giving Tuesday and are trying to figure out where to go from here. Or maybe you already have the whole month of December planned and are looking for a few new ideas to maximize your results.

No matter your starting place, the rest of this guide will be of great value to you to equip you with strategies and tips to maximize donations during the biggest giving week of the year.

Here's what's in store:

- Part 1: Maximizing Donations from Your *Web Traffic*.....pg. 3**
- Part 2: Crafting Your *Emails* During the Last 3 Days.....pg. 9**
- Part 3: Optimizing Your *Donation Page* to Increase Revenue.....pg. 13**

Part 1:

Maximizing Donations from Your Web Traffic

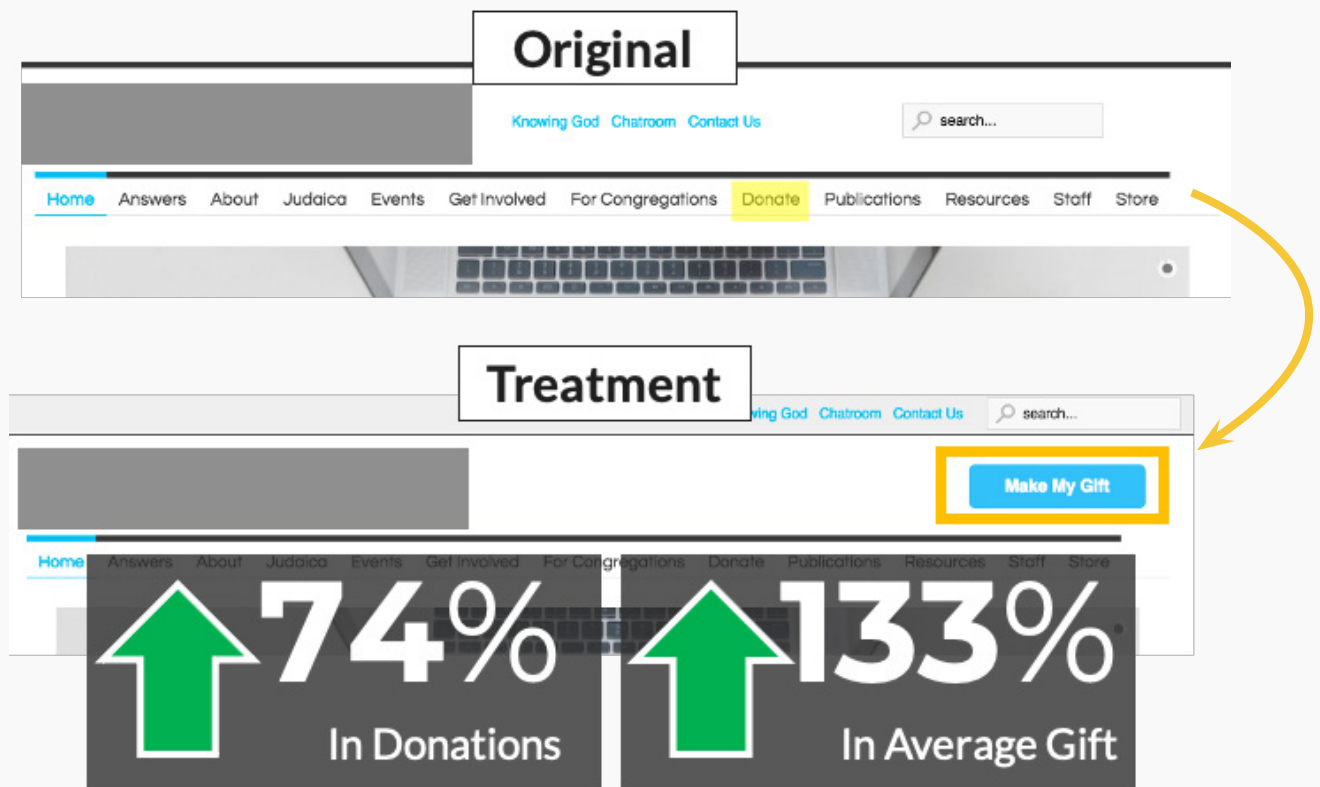
1. Make Your Donation Page Easy to Find

There will never be another time of year where the people visiting your website are more motivated to give. And it's our job as fundraisers to make it as easy as possible for donors to find where to give.

In one experiment, an organization's homepage had a "Donate" link in the top navigation. But they wondered if formatting the link as a button and calling it out in a different color would lead to more donation page traffic.

The result?

Making it incredibly easy to see the donate button didn't just lead to more traffic: it led to a **74% increase in donations** and a **133% increase in average gift size**.



2. Use a Banner or Ad on Your Homepage

Another way to make it easy for your web traffic to see your donation page, the deadline, and any of your specific incentives to give is to use a banner on your homepage.

While this is a helpful tool all year-end season, it's particularly effective during the last week of the year.

One organization used a homepage banner during the month of December and observed how donations were affected over time.

From Dec. 6 – Dec. 13, they saw a 1.1% conversion rate on their banner.

From Dec. 21 – Dec. 27, they saw a 4.6% conversion rate.

So make sure you utilize banner ad placements like this as you get closer to the last week of the year. It serves as an extra help to your website visitors to guide them towards a donation.



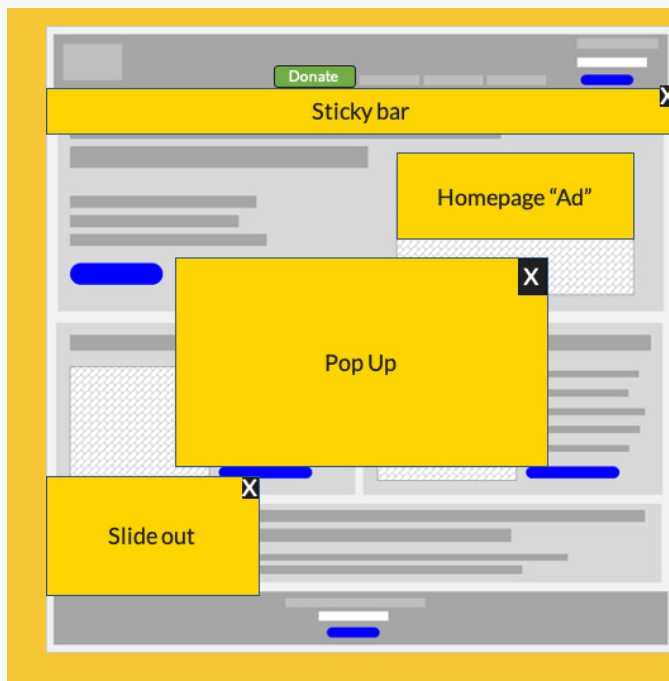
3. Utilize Pop-Ups to Catch Your Visitors' Attention

Pop-up ads are one of the most frustrating things on the internet. Particularly if they have an auto-play video and try to guilt you into filling out a form.

However, when used well, pop-ups can be a very powerful tool to remind donors of the need and the deadline to give.

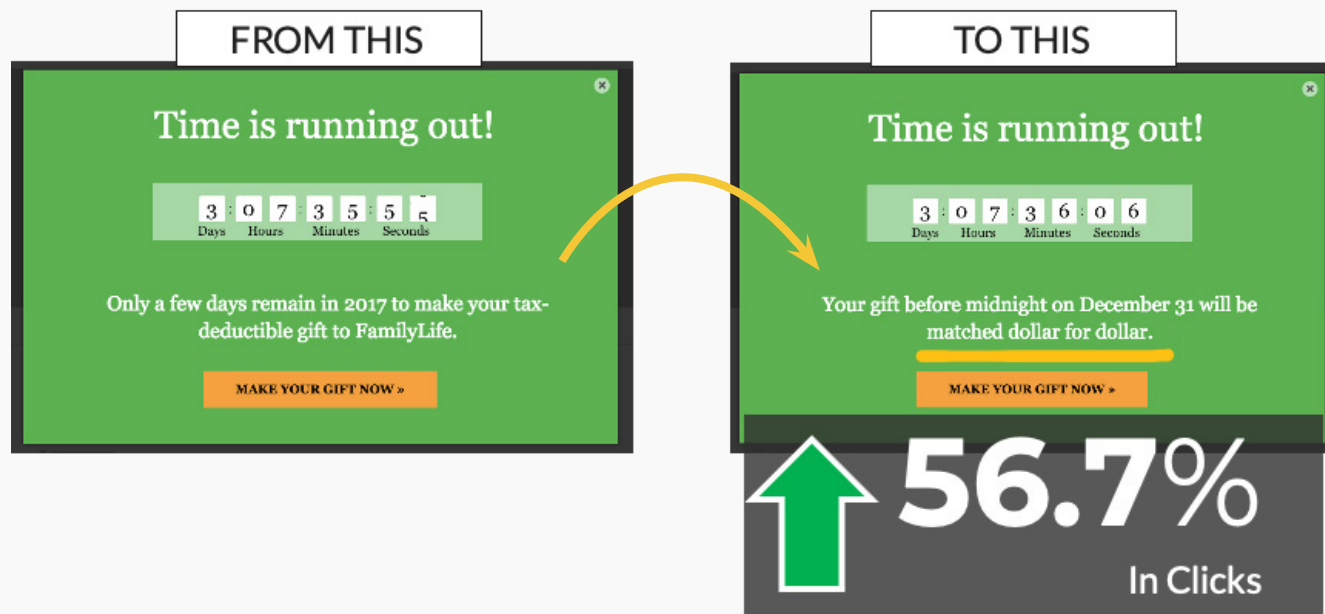
And they can be particularly effective to showcase a specific incentive to give—like a matching challenge.

In one experiment, an organization used a pop-up to make sure donors knew of the deadline to give. But they wondered if using the pop-up to emphasize a matching challenge would be more effective.



The result?

Emphasizing the matching challenge in the pop-up led to a **56%** increase in traffic to the donation page.



4. Add Donation Asks Within Your Articles and Blog Posts

Not all your website visitors in December are coming with the intention to give.

Many visitors during December (and even the last week of the year) may be coming to read an article, blog, or story on your site.

One way to use this type of article content to lead towards a donation is using an in-line donation ask called a “Dear Reader.”

One organization that has a significant amount of traffic reading articles decided to test an in-article dear reader donation ask. The original article had no direct donation call-to-action.

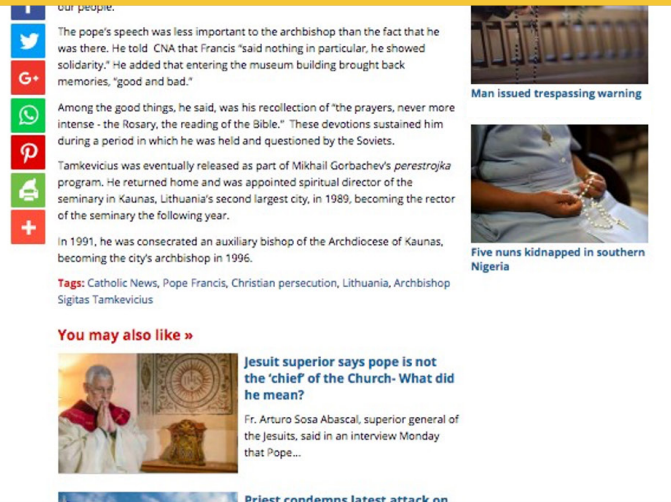
The treatment added a called-out block of text at the end of the article explaining why a donation was important. It included a call-to-action button asking readers to support the organization.

The result?

The dear reader ad led to a **568%** increase in article visitors giving a donation.

Control

No Dear Reader at end of article



The screenshot shows a news article with a sidebar of social media sharing icons (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Email, Print, and a plus sign). The article text discusses a pope's speech and a man's recollection of prayers. Below the main text, there are two related article thumbnails: "Man issued trespassing warning" and "Five nuns kidnapped in southern Nigeria". At the bottom, there is a "You may also like" section with a thumbnail for "Jesuit superior says pope is not the 'chief' of the Church- What did he mean?".

Treatment

Dear Reader at end of article



The screenshot shows the same article as the control, but with a "Dear Reader" block added at the end. The text reads: "Dear Catholic News Agency Reader, We hope the content you've been reading has increased your knowledge on the cultural, political, and spiritual matters that affect your life and the lives of millions of Catholics. We often hear from our audience how difficult it can be to find a trustworthy source for news and information. In today's media world, the truth often gets compromised and is presented from someone's uninformed opinion, rather than facts. EWTN's Catholic News Agency is a remedy for this situation. As one of the fastest growing Catholic news providers in the world, Catholic News Agency offers free access to its news and resources to millions of Catholics worldwide. In an effort to increase awareness of the activities of the universal Church and to foster a sense of Catholic thought and culture in the life of every Catholic, Catholic News Agency also offers this content to Catholic dioceses, parishes, and websites. To assist in keeping the content you are reading free of charge, we rely on the gifts from our generous readers, like you. Would you help us continue this mission and help us remain as effective as possible? When you give a gift to support the Catholic News Agency, you will help: Provide a timely Catholic perspective on today's issues to millions of Catholics every day. Equip and embolden Catholics to address today's issues on faith and reason. Unify and connect Catholics to the Church. As you rely on Catholic News Agency news and information, please make a gift to support the Catholic News Agency." Below the text is a "Support Catholic News Agency" button. A large green arrow points upwards from the button to a large "568%" figure, with "In Donations" written below it.

5. Add a Donation Form Right on Your Homepage

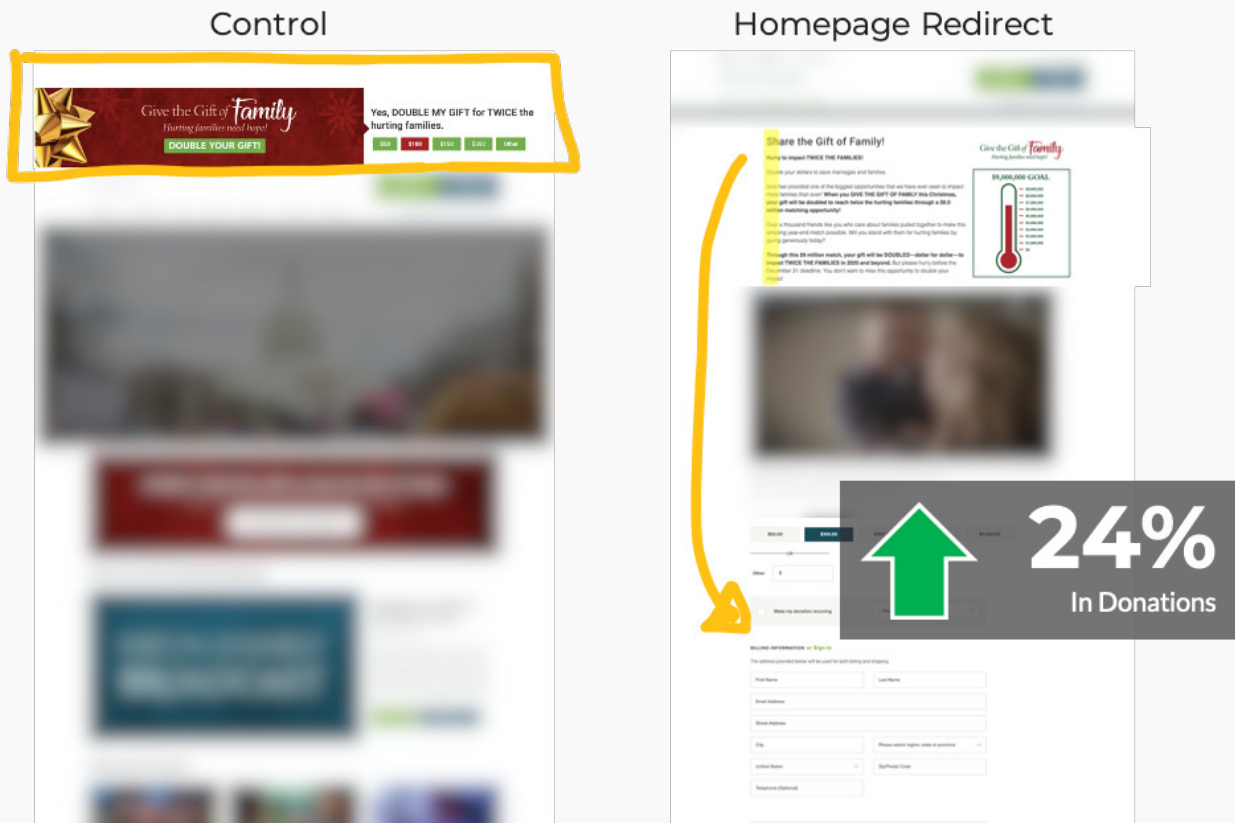
If you're looking to really go all-in on the last week of the year, you might test using a homepage takeover.

In this experiment, the organization had already tested into using various donation banners and call-to-actions on their homepage. And they wondered if converting the homepage into a donation page for the last few days of the year could improve donations.

For their treatment, they took over their homepage with a donation form including:

- Copy explaining why someone should give
- A progress bar outlining their goal
- A donation form embedded right on the page

This homepage takeover led to a **24%** increase in donations from visitors coming to their homepage.



Part 2:

Crafting Your Emails During the Last 3 Days

During the last 3 days of the year, email is one of the biggest drivers you can use to get your donors attention, invoke a sense of urgency, and lead them towards a year-end donation.

And there are 3 emails that you'll want to send during the last 3 days of the year.

1. The December 30th Email


On December 30th, you'll want to send an email to your donors and subscribers emphasizing the year-end deadline.

Ideally, you've been explaining why someone should give to you all season long. If so, this email can be fairly short and to the point. You'll want to remind donors of key reasons to give, emphasize the deadline, and announce any new incentives you may have.

However, if you haven't emailed your donors in December yet, you might want to spend a little more time answering the question, "Why should I give to you this year-end season, rather than some other organization, or not at all?"

Here's quick checklist of what to include in your December 30th email:

- ❑ Call your donor by name.
- ❑ Acknowledge the deadline and the urgency to give.
- ❑ Announce any new incentives to give now.
- ❑ Ask for an immediate donation.

 **Special Olympics**

Your gift is TRIPLED when you donate before midnight tomorrow >>

Evette — today, you can give TRIPLE the support, and TRIPLE the joy, to a Special Olympics athlete. That's because your gift to Special Olympics will be TRIPLED!

00 DAYS **00** HOURS **00** MINUTES **00** SECONDS

TRIPLE YOUR GIFT

Give now and your gift will help **3X** as many athletes [get access to the health care they need and deserve.](#)

Give now and your gift will help **3X** as many athletes [step off the sidelines and feel the rush of taking the field for a big game.](#)

Give now and your gift will help **3X** as many athletes [live in a unified world without discrimination.](#)

Your donation will do all of this and more — but only if you give before midnight TOMORROW:

specialolympics.org/tripleyourgift

Counting on you,

Joe Hergert
Manager, Strategic Gifts

2. The Morning of December 31st

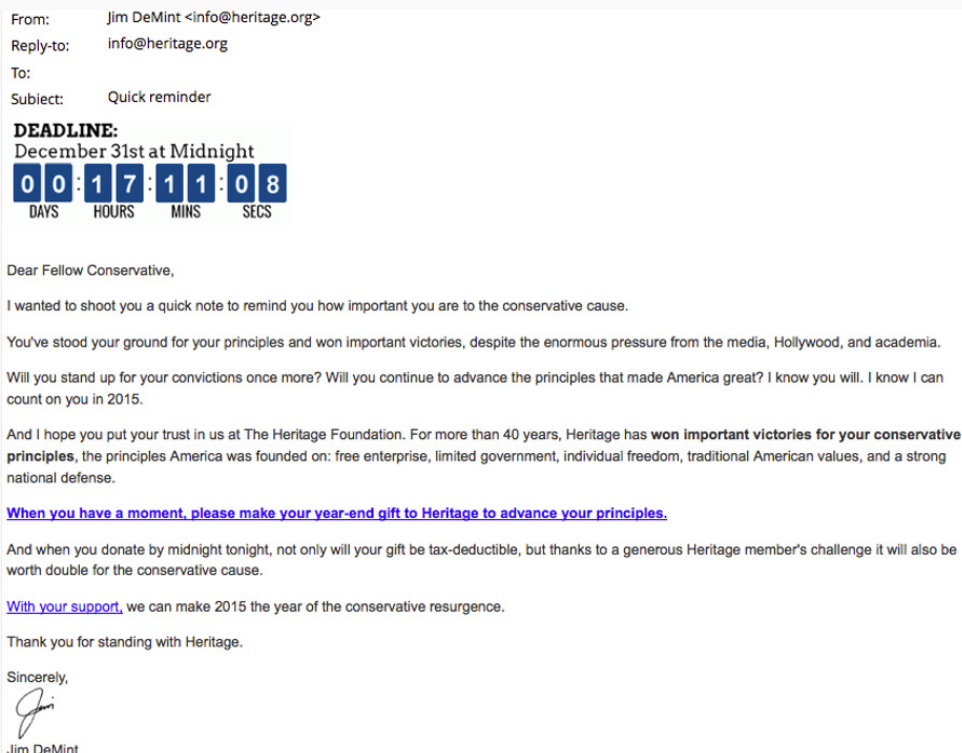
On December 31st, the last day of the year, you'll want to send two emails: one in the morning and one in the evening.

The morning email doesn't have to be long. Again, you should be explaining why someone should give to you in your communication all season long.

This email does not need to rehash every reason why someone should give. It should serve as a reminder of the deadline to give and focus on creating urgency to achieve the goal.

Here's your checklist for the morning of December 31st email:

- ❑ Call your donor by name.
- ❑ Acknowledge the deadline and the urgency to give.
- ❑ Tell them that you haven't received their donation yet.
- ❑ Announce any new incentives to give before the deadline.
- ❑ Add a countdown clock.
- ❑ Ask for an immediate donation.



3. The Evening of December 31st

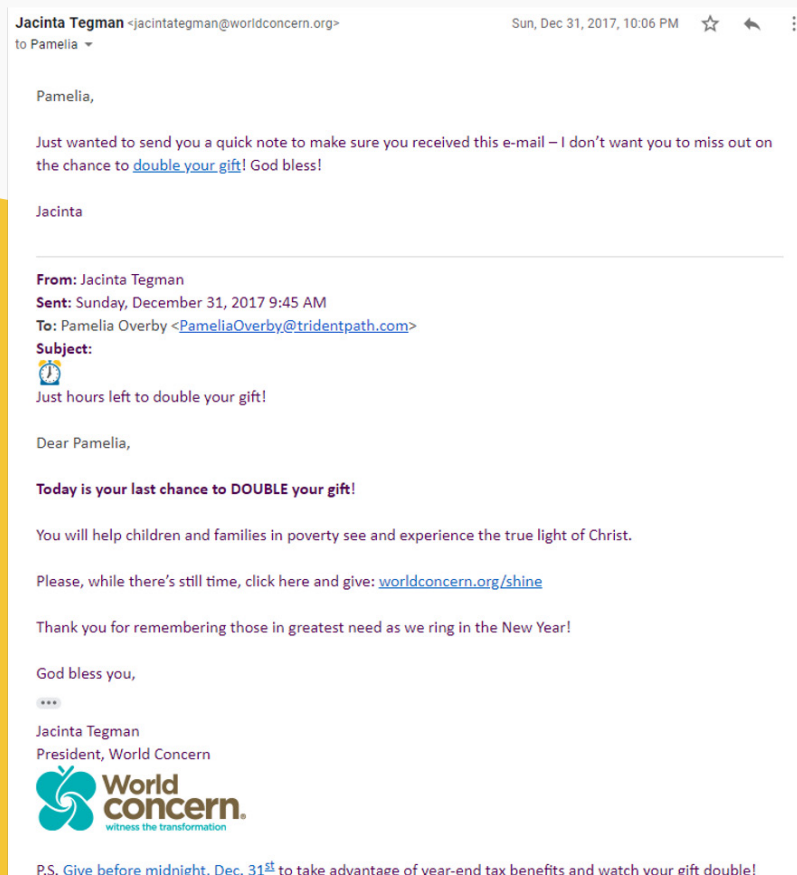
Finally, on the evening of December 31st, you'll want to send one final email to prompt donors to give. With inboxes often being flooded at the end of the year, it's likely that many of your donors didn't see your first two emails.

The purpose of this email is to send a personal note to check-in and make sure your donors saw the opportunity to give before the deadline.

This email does not need to be overly complicated. We recommend writing a short, personal note and simply copy/paste your earlier email below. It should look like an email forward.

Here's your checklist for the evening of December 31st email:

- ❑ Resend your email from the morning.
- ❑ Add a short and personal note at the top restating the deadline.
- ❑ Ask for an immediate donation.



Part 3:

Incredible ways to increase your revenue while maintaining satisfaction

Get everything you wanted by downloading this free ebook!

Optimizing Your Donation Page to Increase Revenue

Incredible ways to increase your revenue while maintaining satisfaction

REVENUE

GET THE EBOOK

MacBook Pro

1. Headline

Orient your headline around the year-end season, rather than using something more general. In one experiment, clearly saying “Make your year-end gift” instead of “You can help secure a better future” led to a **10.9%** increase in donations.

Original Headline

You can help secure a better future

Treatment Headline

Make your year-end gift to ORGANIZATION



10.9%

In Donations

2. Body Copy

The words you use on your donation page are often the single biggest factor influencing someone's likelihood of completing a donation. And on your year-end donation page, you'll want to make sure your copy accomplishes two things.

1. Make sure your copy is contextual and continuous.

You likely have traffic coming to your donation page from a variety of sources: emails, ads, social media, your homepage, etc. You'll need to make sure your donation page copy makes sense to visitors coming from each of these different sources.

If you mention a key reason to give in an email, but it's not represented on the donation page, your donor may experience whiplash and not end up giving.

Ensure that your donation page is written to align with the motivations and reasons to give of all your various page visitors.

2. Emphasize the year-end campaign and specific goals.

Your donation page shouldn't be a carbon-copy of your normal, year-round donation page. You'll want to adjust your copy to emphasize specific year-end goals, the year-end deadline, and any specific incentives you may have (matching challenge, unique goals, etc.).

In one experiment, the organization tested using more year-end focused language instead of their year-round donation page copy. The year-end focused language led to a **12%** increase in donations.

FROM THIS

TO THIS

12.2%*
In Donations

3. Countdown Clocks

Add a countdown clock to your donation page to emphasize the rapidly approaching deadline. In one experiment, adding a countdown clock led to a **61.8%** increase in donations.

But be careful. Adding a countdown clock too early in your campaign could give donors an excuse to put their gift off until later.

FROM THIS

Your Gift Matters

As we count down to the end of 2014, help us reach our \$1.2 million goal with a tribute donation.

Give to CaringBridge

Donation Amount

\$70 \$125 \$300 Other

\$70.00 (minimum \$10)

* Payment Plan

One-time payment for the full amount

Monthly (12 per year) ongoing payments

Your Tribute in Honor of Deborah

TO THIS

Your Gift Matters

3 days, 8 hrs, 52 mins, 7 secs remaining until the year-end charitable deadline

As we count down to the end of 2014, help us reach our \$1.2 million goal with a tribute donation in honor of Deborah.

Give to CaringBridge

Donation Amount

\$70 \$125 \$300 Other

\$70.00 (minimum \$10)

* Payment Plan

One-time payment for the full amount

Monthly (12 per year) ongoing payments

Your Tribute in Honor of Deborah

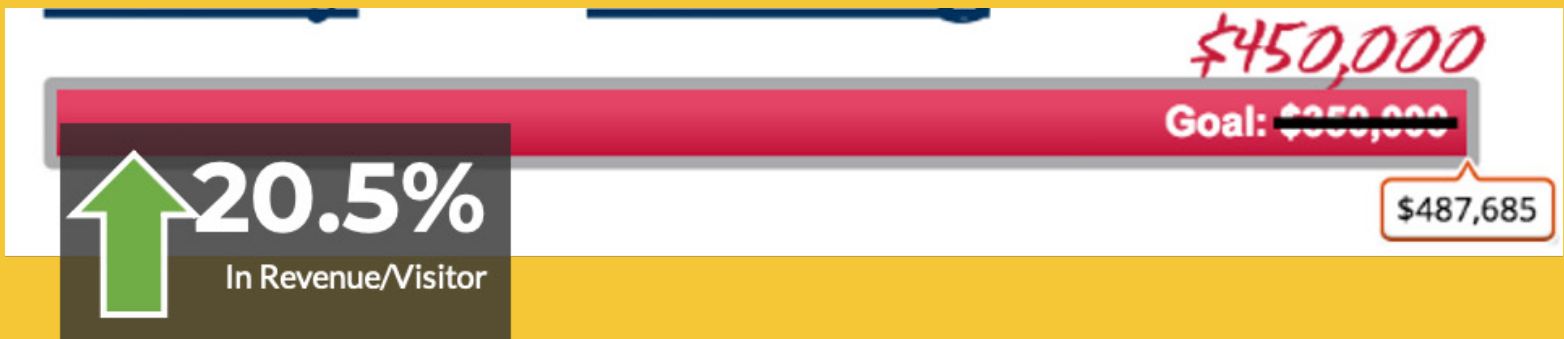
61.8%

In Donations

4. Progress Bars

Add a progress bar to your donation page to clearly show donors how they can contribute to your year-end goal. In one experiment, adding a progress bar led to a **20.5%** increase in revenue.

A word of caution: Don't use a countdown clock and progress bar in the same place on your page. This can actually create more confusion and has led to a **28%** decrease in donations.



5. Incentives

Incentives are not a reason to give. But they can be a reason to give now or to give more. Consider using a matching challenge to further incentivize donors to give now.

In one experiment, simply highlighting a matching challenge using a sticky bar led to a 44% increase in donations.

FROM THIS

FAMILYLIFE
Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.
[A Cru Ministry]

You Can Help Create Godly Homes Through Biblical Guidance and Practical Resources

Your support today **DOUBLES** through a \$645,000 Matching Gift

Goal: \$645,000
\$589,746

Families need the help and hope found in Christ now more than ever. But they can't do this alone. God has called us to provide the biblical guidance and practical resources to empower them to pass that legacy on to the families around them.

To help with this, FamilyLife has received an amazing Matching Gift that will help reach twice as many families! But this limited-time opportunity ends May 31.

When you make a gift today, it will be matched dollar for dollar—up to \$645,000—to reach families with biblical truth. Your generous gift will go directly towards...

TO THIS

Reminder: A generous donor will match YOUR donation today, up to \$645,000.

FAMILYLIFE
Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.
[A Cru Ministry]

You Can Help Create Godly Homes Through Biblical Guidance and Practical Resources

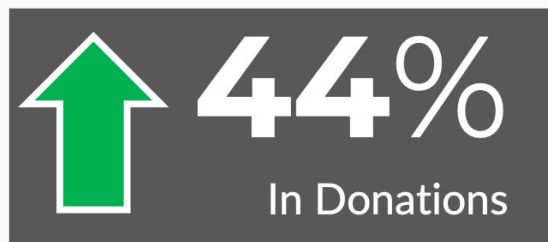
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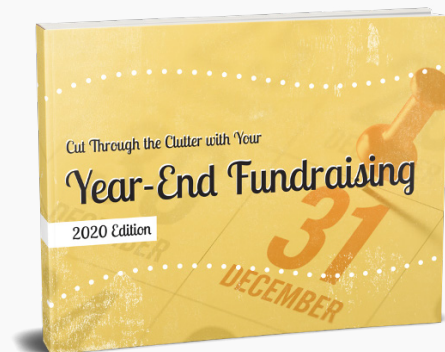


Other Year-End Resources

Cut Through the Clutter with Your Year-End Fundraising

This free eBook will give you 5 year-end fundraising insights from an in-depth analysis of 2400+ emails sent by real organizations during year-end 2019. And then, you'll find 10 proven strategies that you can implement in your campaign to bring in more donations.

You can download your free copy of Cut Through the Clutter here: <https://www.nextafter.com/cut-through-the-clutter/>



The Year-End Fundraising Accelerator

In the free 3-session Year-End Fundraising Accelerator training, you'll find ideas to:

- Help potential donors understand the importance of your organization and cause
- Prime and prepare your donors for a forthcoming year-end donation appeal
- Make your year-end donation appeal in a way that leads to maximum results

You'll find new ideas to write more compelling copy, weave in credibility-boosting testimonials, and optimize your calls-to-action to see even greater donor response.

You can get started on the free year-end fundraising class here: <https://www.nextafter.com/year-end-fundraising-accelerator/>



Year-End Fundraising Certification Course

During this 4-session certification course, you'll learn all of the essential ingredients needed for a successful campaign, as well as ideas on how to optimize each part based on data, research, and learnings from thousands of online fundraising experiments.

Get access to the certification course here:

<https://courses.nextafter.com/courses/year-end-fundraising-for-online-fundraisers>



[nextafter.com/yearend](https://www.nextafter.com/yearend)

About NextAfter

NextAfter is Three Things...

A Fundraising Research Lab

Conducting marketplace research, A/B testing, and digital experimentation to discover what works to attract, acquire, and retain more donors and raise more money online.

A Digital Fundraising Consultancy

Working side-by-side with nonprofit organizations to help them develop and execute research-backed digital fundraising strategies designed to generate sustainable online revenue growth.

An Institute for Online Fundraising

Equipping nonprofit fundraisers and digital marketers with data-driven and evidence-based research, resources, and training.

These three things are unified in our mission to decode what works in fundraising and make it as accessible to as many nonprofits as possible. It is our belief that if we can truly deliver on our mission we can, together, unleash the most generous generation in the history of the world.

Learn more about the research lab at nextafter.com/research, our consulting at nextafter.com, and the institute at nextafter.com/institute.

nextafter.com



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