

Why Your Emails Aren't Raising More

& What High-Performing Nonprofits Do Differently

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Today we're covering:

- Why email revenue feels unpredictable
- What high-performing nonprofits do differently
- The 3 shifts that make donors more ready to give
- How to turn email into a more reliable fundraising channel



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SIGNS YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT ROOM...



- You have a list, but email revenue still feels random
- Your team debates how often to send
- You send newsletters and appeals, but donors rarely reply, click or give
- You know email could work harder, but you don't want to annoy people



WHAT CHANGES WHEN EMAIL WORKS

Consistent

Revenue doesn't depend on one or two giant moments a year.

Connected

Donors recognize you, respond, and stay engaged.

Repeatable

Your team knows how email fits into fundraising



I'M CHRISTINA TZAVARAS EDWARDS

- Nearly two decades in nonprofit fundraising + marketing
- \$15M+ raised alongside organizations in 20+ countries
- Founder, Splendid Consulting® + creator of Easy Emails for Impact™



Most nonprofit email is built around what the organization has to say.



High-performing email is built around what the donor needs to hear next.



You already have the infrastructure. Now make the emails work together.

- Newsletters. Updates. Announcements. One-off appeals.
- All useful, but none of them become a fundraising strategy on their own.



There's nothing wrong with *news*.

The problem is when *the news becomes the strategy*.



- “Here’s what we’ve been up to”
- “Our latest newsletter”
- “New program update”
- “Meet our new board chair”



**Good intentions.
Disconnected results.**



Information alone rarely creates movement.

- The donor is asked to observe, not participate
- Fundraising only enters the conversation when you need money.
- Every message can be skimmed and forgotten
- There's no momentum between fundraising asks



Which one have you heard in a staff meeting?

1 “Let’s send one email and see how it goes.”

2 “We don’t have enough to say right now. Let’s hold off on an update.”

3 “Can we make this sound a little more polished?”

4 “We already mentioned this once, so we don’t need to say it again.”

Drop the number in the chat.



STRATEGY #1

Stay visible
before you need
money.

Frequency primes donors.



The ask works better when it isn't the first time they've heard from you.

Familiarity is built before the fundraising email.

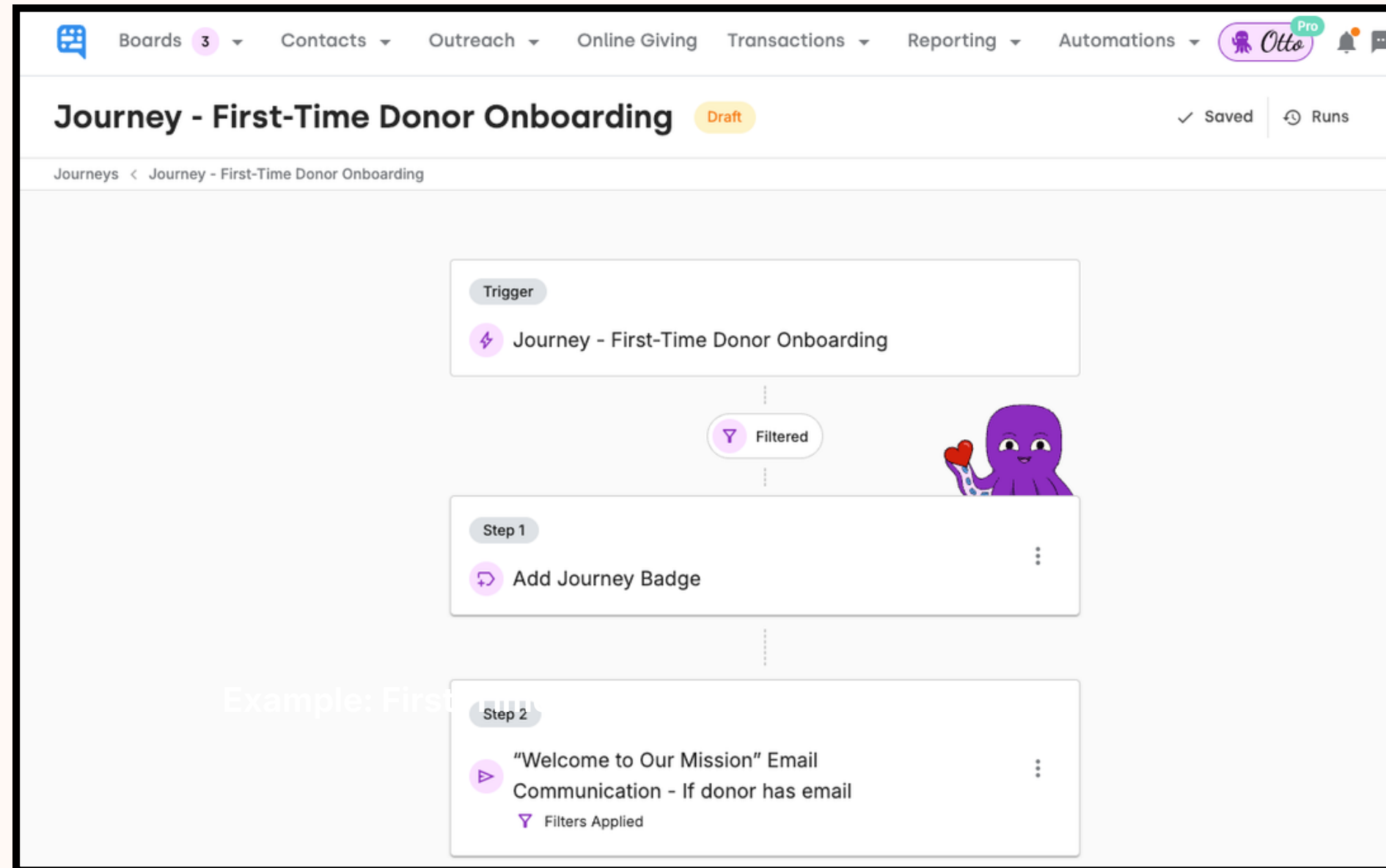
- People often need multiple exposures before taking action.
- Most nonprofits severely underestimate how much repetition is required.

**You remember
every email you
sent.
Your donor does
not.**



Stop disappearing between asks

If consistency depends on someone remembering to hit send, it is not a scalable strategy.



DonorDock automation
journey example

Build the rhythm once. Let your CRM help carry it.

A healthy email list will have unsubscribes.

Your goal is a **responsive** donor list.

FEAR

**“If I email more,
people will
unsubscribe.”**

REALITY

**A tiny number will.
That’s normal.
The bigger risk is
becoming forgettable.**

PROOF

**Average nonprofit
unsubscribe rates
are extremely low.**

Screenshot this slide for your next team meeting.



CASE STUDY:

Founder-Led Nonprofit

Over **\$8,400**
recurring revenue



53 new recurring
donors in 7 days



No social media, no ad spend—just
well-timed emails using our Easy
Emails campaign formula



Her list and open rates have
grown even with the increased
frequency



Proof that small shifts in
cadence = big results



**“When I send emails,
we make money”**



STRATEGY #2

**Sound like a
person, not an
institution.**

Personal voice builds trust.



You already have the story. You're just burying it.

Same organization. Same impact. Different email.

BEFORE

Subject: August Newsletter

We are excited to share an update from our summer programming. Thanks to the support of our community, 127 students participated in enrichment activities this month...

The story is there.
The donor has to dig for it.

AFTER

Subject: Frankie almost didn't come back.

Frankie stood outside the classroom for ten minutes before walking in.

Three weeks later, their mom told us they were asking to come early.

The story leads.
The donor feels something faster.

The story didn't change. What led the email did.



The 3-minute gut check.

Open your sent folder. Pull up your last 3 emails.

- 1 Would you open it?
- 2 Does it sound specific to your organization, or could any nonprofit have sent it?
- 3 Is there one clear reason to care?

Wherever you winced, that's your gap.



CASE STUDY

Small Shop Comms & Development Team

\$10k+

raised from a list she already had



No new list. \$10,000+ from one email campaign. 3 Major Donor Upgrades secured.

- One list. One new approach.
- **3 major donors** upgraded
- Lapsed donors came back
- Her team got excited: email became a fundraising & lead-gen asset

She reconnected with why she fundraises, and the ask she actually believed in, and donors answered.

"I was reminded of how much I love to write."



STRATEGY #3

Run Campaigns, Not One-Offs

Every email has a job



An email campaign is not five versions of the same ask.



Email fundraising comes from series of emails designed to move someone toward a decision.



This is where most organizations lose revenue.
They send the ask before they've created the moment.



One or two lonely emails is a very expensive wish.

If you're sending one lonely email and hoping it brings in thousands, that's like putting a garage sale sign three miles from your house and praying someone finds you.

Campaigns > one-off emails



Repetition isn't the enemy. Randomness is.

FEAR

“If I run more campaigns, donors will get tired of giving.”

REALITY

Donors tune out random, repetitive asks. A campaign gives the repetition a reason.

PROOF

Multi-email campaigns outperform one-off blasts.
Your donors are busy. A good message often needs more than one chance to land.



CASE STUDY:

First-time fundraiser

Nearly **5X**
donations in one campaign



\$1,900 → \$9,000 in
campaign revenue



17 → 114 donors following the Easy
Emails framework



Same list, no additional spend

The campaign didn't just raise more money. It activated nearly 100 more donors.



“Before, my emails felt like they came from a C-suite. Then I changed it, and it was more fun.”



News-first vs. Campaign-based

BEFORE

NEWS-FIRST

“What do we need to tell people?”



One-off sends



Fundraising appears when money is needed



Revenue feels unpredictable



AFTER

CAMPAIGN-BASED

“What does the donor need to hear next?”



Connected communication



Fundraising is built into the strategy



Revenue becomes more repeatable



High-performing nonprofits don't have magic lists.

1 Show up before the ask.

Frequency builds readiness.

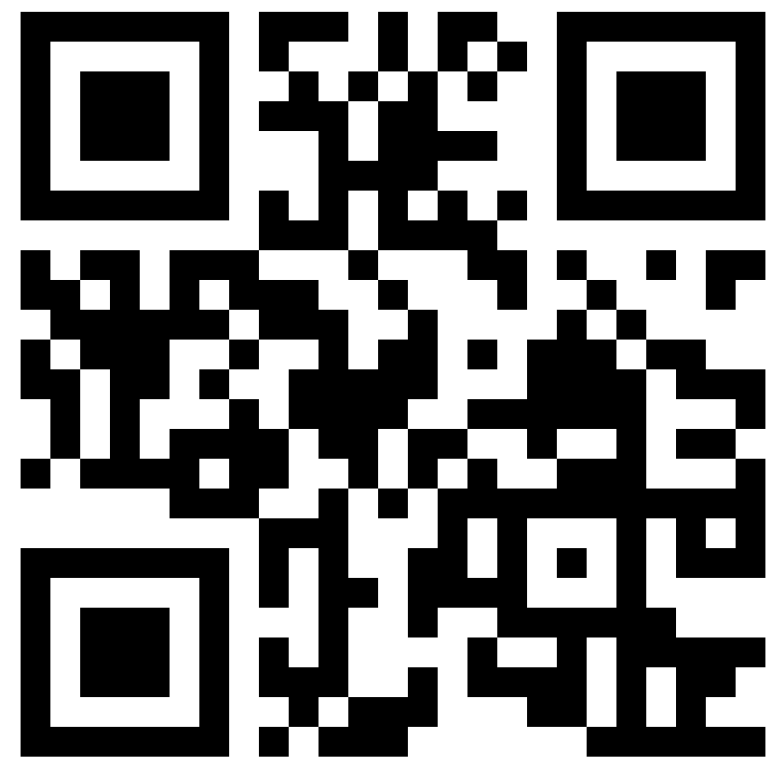
2 Sound like a person.

Personal voice builds trust.

3 Run campaigns, not one-offs.

Every email has a job.

Same list. Better strategy.



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