



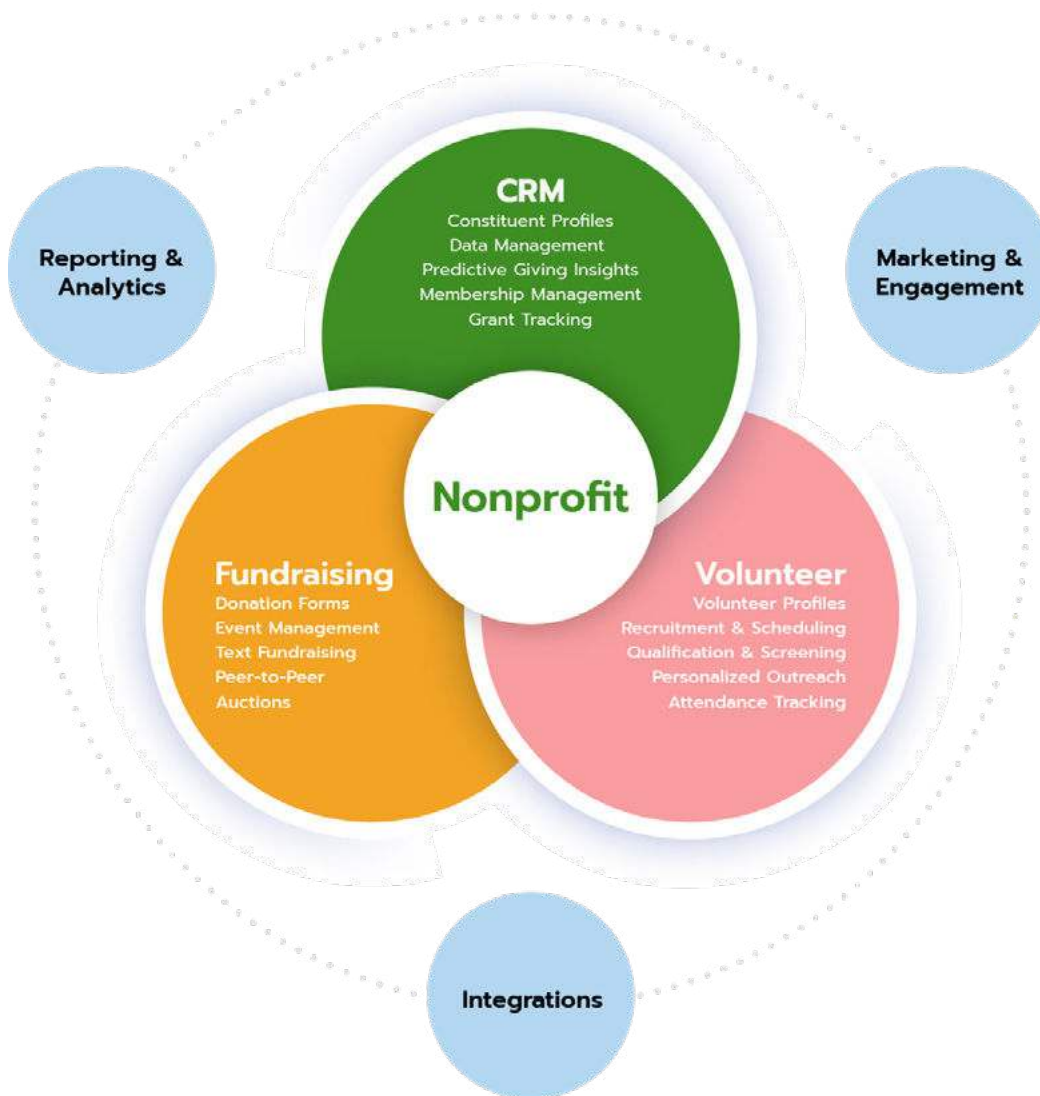
RETAINING YOUR P2PEEPS:

Tips for retaining your peer-to-peer donors (and participants!)

Connections that maximize impact

Bring together the best in donor management, fundraising, and volunteer management to:

- Connect data, external tools, and teams
- Automate & simplify your day-to-day
- Insights that lead to better results
- Attract new supporters
- Increase fundraising revenue



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Introduction

Even with the best, segmented, and most-personalized donor communications and stewardship, every nonprofit is going to lose donors. It's pretty much unavoidable. Some will have major life changes that you won't hear about, let alone overcome.

Some donors, like peer-to-peer donors, give in such a way that retaining is just inherently difficult.

Why?

Think about it. Typically, a third-party is generating the donation for you—sometimes without your knowledge or involvement. Similar to memorial donors, a peer-to-peer donor is typically supporting the individual fundraiser(s), not necessarily your individual organization.

Think about the last time you contributed to a friend or family member's peer-to-peer campaign. You donated because you're their friend, not necessarily because you have a close connection to the organization they were raising funds for.

This isn't to say that peer-to-peer fundraising is bad, or flawed, or problematic. It's just different, and it can be a big boost for your organization. It offers a way for your supporters to raise money on your behalf while increasing their engagement in the process. The best part is that the cost per acquisition of these donors is often very low. The tradeoff is that retaining those donors can be a little tricky.

Don't worry, there are answers! And we've broken them down for you in this eBook. Let's make the case for why you should care about retention in the first place!

Why Retention?

If fundraising were a coin, retention would represent one entire side. While the act of generating a donation is a worthy pursuit, it's important that fundraisers not rest on their laurels once a gift has been made.

One could argue that the true work of fundraising begins after the donation is secured, not before. Unfortunately, if the national averages for donor retention rates are any indication, one side of the coin isn't getting enough attention.

In 2006, the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Urban Institute established the **Fundraising Effectiveness Project (FEP)** to conduct research on fundraising effectiveness, with a particular focus on donor retention.



FEP's main output is their annual Fundraising Effectiveness Survey Report, which consists of an analysis of data collected from thousands of participating nonprofits. Thanks to the cooperation and support of the members of the AFP Donor Software Workgroup, which includes companies like Bloomerang, Neon and, DonorPerfect to name a few, anonymized data flows from these software vendors to FEP, resulting in a comprehensive report on the gains and losses of the participating nonprofits.

Since 2006, the report has grown to include billions of dollars in transactions, offering a robust snapshot of the sector overall. While each report is rich in data, followers typically anticipate the FEP reports for one key metric: the average donor retention rate, or the percentage of donors who give from one year to the next.

In the nearly two decades since the study began, donor retention hasn't fluctuated much outside of the 40th-45th percentile in any year analyzed; much like the stubborn 2% of GDP.

In other words, the sector on average loses more than half of the donors who gave in the previous year.

The news is worse for first-time donors (those who have only given one gift), where retention rates are around 20%, and dropping. Keep in mind this is for direct gifts, not peer-to-peer gifts, so it's fair to assume that peer-to-peer rates are even lower.

According to Adrian Sargeant, one of the world's foremost authorities on donor loyalty and engagement:

"We're caught on this treadmill where we have to spend lots of money on acquisition, which most nonprofits lose money on anyway, just to stand still."

You might be asking yourself: who cares? Who cares if we have a 40% average donor retention rate, or a 20% first-time donor retention rate, or a 5% peer-to-peer donor retention rate?

It all comes down to the money you're leaving on the table.

The difference in donor lifetime value between an organization with a 40% retention rate and 50% retention rate can be massive. If both organizations had a database of 5,000 donors with an average gift of \$200, the organization with a 50% retention rate would raise almost \$500,000 more than their counterpart at 40% from just those retained donors.

Indeed, just a small change in retention can mean a lot for your bottom line. Those numbers can seem a little abstract at a macro level, so let's zoom in a bit.

Say you acquire a brand new donor who gave you \$25, at a cost-per acquisition of \$32. If you don't get a second gift from that donor, you're already in the negative. But you'll likely spend more money trying to get them to give again (direct mail, email marketing, events, etc.), widening that gap if they ultimately do not give again. This is why the first-time donor retention rate of 20% is such a silent killer. In most cases, you need that second gift just to break even.

You might be asking yourself "Didn't you say that the cost-per-acquisition on peer-to-peer donors is super low? Who cares if we don't retain them?"

There's a lot of truth to this. Along with memorial donors, peer-to-peer is a type of donor you should spend the least amount of time agonizing over. However, we have some simple strategies to offer you that can help raise those rates with minimal effort, meaning your ROI on a peer-to-peer campaign can be huge!

What Donors Want

As dire as the retention averages can look, we luckily have an equal amount of research into why donors keep giving to organizations.

In 2011, the DonorVoice collaborated with around 250 nonprofits to find out what they had done well to keep about 1,200 donors loyal for many years. A survey was sent to those loyal donors with a list of 32 things that nonprofits do well for their donors. The survey asked recipients to rank items that mattered the most to them and by order of importance.

Here are the top seven:

- Donor perceives your organization to be effective in trying to achieve its mission
- Donor knows what to expect from your organization with each interaction
- Donor receives a timely thank you
- Donor receives opportunities to make their views known
- Donor is given the feeling that they are part of an important cause
- Donor feels their involvement is appreciated
- Donor receives information showing who is being helped.



When it comes to retention, let this list be your north star.

Regardless of the donor type, it should be your goal to thank them, tell them the impact of their gift, and get to know them all in a contextualized way.

How you do this for peer-to-peer donors specifically can be tricky, for all the reasons we've already talked about. But fear not; we've got you covered. Let's dive in!

Improving Peer-to-Peer Donor Retention

YOUR DONOR DATABASE

The first step in having any chance at all in retaining your peer-to-peer donors is to utilize your donor database. Simply put, you need to log their donor and transaction information in your donor database. How else do you expect to communicate to them if they aren't stored in a centralized location?

When it comes to choosing a peer-to-peer software provider, make sure it can integrate or at least export to your donor database. Choosing providers that have tight integrations will make your life much easier by eliminating any need for data entry.

Ideally, when someone donates through your peer-to-peer platform, they automatically get added to your database.

If this isn't how your technology works, it's still worth it to go through the process of adding those donors and transactions into your database manually.

The point here is that they get marked as peer-to-peer donors so you can segment them into future, dedicated fundraising campaigns. The worst thing you can do is communicate to them in a generic way with all of your other donor types, frequencies, channels, etc.

Don't just lump all their email addresses into your email marketing system and hope that they'll engage with your email blasts.

Before we dive into specific retention strategies, let's look at one specific tactic that will render that advice moot, if you can successfully pull it off.

RECURRING GIVING

Peer-to-peer campaigns are an excellent way to attract one-time donations from new supporters, but with the right strategy, your campaign can also help you secure commitment for recurring giving as well.

According to the donorCentrics™ U.S. Recurring Giving Benchmarking Analysis, retention rates for recurring gifts can be upwards of 90%, compared to 40% for one-time gifts, and a single-digit rate for one-time peer-to-peer gifts.

In other words, getting a recurring commitment from new peer-to-peer donors is a great way to sidestep the entire issue of retention, since you'll have an ongoing commitment and a recurring payment method right from the get-go.

But be cautious with this step. You don't want your organization to come across as too aggressive or pushy because it can decrease your conversion rate or lower your retention rate. And that's exactly what you don't want!

You'll need to time this step graciously for it to come from the right place: your organization's heart and passion for your cause.

When your supporters are fundraising for you, your supporter can verbally suggest a recurring giving option as donors contribute. If your peer-to-peer software offers it, you can also include a recurring gift option directly on your supporters' fundraising pages; that way, donors only have to check off a box or two. Signing up for recurring gifts automatically engages new donors on a more regular basis, increasing donor retention.

The Qgiv by Bloomerang peer-to-peer platform offers a recurring donation option. [Read more about how to use recurring donations in your peer-to-peer campaign in this blog!](#)



Of course, let these new donors choose how much they'd like to donate. In other words, give them a list of monetary amounts to choose from that are meaningful to your organization. Whether they're giving \$5 or \$50 a month, stickiness will be created between them and the nonprofit immediately.

If you don't get a recurring commitment initially, don't be afraid of making it the basis of the second ask. Just don't attempt to do that without following the rest of the advice found below.

For now, let's get back to specific tips for retaining peer-to-peer donors.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR AUTOMATED FOLLOW-UP WITH THE DONOR

Sometimes retaining a one-time peer-to-peer donor is all about making them feel noticed and appreciated, which can be easily accomplished by making a few tweaks to your automated follow-up communications. Are you sending an automated donation receipt via email? If so, try customizing the receipt to include a salutation directed to the donor. An email receipt that starts with “Thank you, [Donor’s Name]!” is much more personal than only providing the transaction summary. Your automated email receipts are also a great place to talk about the impact of donations, your organization’s mission, and invites for the donor to get more involved. If adding your donor to an automated welcome series, let donors know in the receipt so they expect emails from you.

Use the donor’s name in all follow-up communications. Also, note whether the donor gave to a specific fund. You should tailor your communications to your donors’ interests. Want to show donors you’re really paying attention? Include a line in follow-up communications thanking them for giving during your peer-to-peer event.



CONTEXTUALIZE YOUR PERSONAL FOLLOW-UP WITH THE DONOR

One tactic that is almost indispensable is to involve the original fundraiser in the acknowledgement and future appeal process. After all, they were the one soliciting the gift, so why shouldn’t they be on the front lines of further stewarding the donor?

In the case of peer-to-peer, rather than sending a thank-you letter that references the fundraiser, what if the letter came from the fundraiser herself? She could thank the donor and explain why she chose to support the organization. Then, have her lay out a case for support in the future. Have the fundraiser reiterate the great work that you do, how the money will be used and why they support your organization. This may be the first time that your organization has ever truly been explained or described to the donor! Even though someone has already donated, they may need to be fully introduced to your charity!

Remember: your new peer-to-peer donor may not know much about your organization, or even understand that the gift is benefiting you. Don't be afraid to re-introduce your organization to the donor in your gift acknowledgement and be sure to reference the fundraiser so that they know why they're getting this acknowledgement. Because of how easy it is to donate to a peer-to-peer

campaign, you really cannot underestimate the likelihood that donors will have no memory of doing so!

Finally, ask them to consider continuing their support beyond just their peer-to-peer donation. By leveraging the fundraiser, you can set an expectation for future giving on the peer-to-peer donor's behalf.

THANK THEIR SOCKS OFF

Keep in mind, it's almost impossible to be too thankful!

Even though this is a digital gift acquisition channel, there's no reason why you can't go analog in your acknowledgement process. In fact, in today's digital world, it might make an even greater impression.

If a new donor gave you her phone number when it wasn't required on the donation form, that might be an invitation to call that donor to express your heartfelt thanks over the phone. If you don't get a phone number, consider sending her a thoughtfully handwritten note from one of your employees or board members.

One of our Qgiv staff members frequently cites an example of receiving a personal thank-you phone call from the CEO of an animal rescue she gave to. This was years ago. She still talks about it. It made THAT much of an impression.

After the initial thank-you, be sure to give donors progress reports on where their donations are being used and how they're

furthering your cause. Updates can be sent generally in your newsletter or, better yet, through a personalized email!

Along with personalized thank-yous, thoroughly engaging supporters in the progress of your work is essential to avoid any lapses in giving.



GET TO KNOW THEM

According to Dr. Adrian Sargeant, two-way interactions significantly improve donor retention. Start a dialogue early on in your communications to the donor and use the opportunity to find out more about them personally. “What interests you about our organization/mission?” and “What kind of results do you expect from our organization?” are excellent leading questions.

Those who engage in these surveys will self-select out of your peer-to-peer donors likely to lapse and into a far-more engaged group. Not only do donors like to be asked for their feedback, but the information you glean will be invaluable in communicating to them in the future.

While your fundraisers will already have an established trust with the donors they recruit, you’ll have a comfortable relationship with your regular donors, which will give you multiple and differing perspectives in feedback for your organization.

You’ll want to know how your donors feel about your donation request strategies and if you’ve made them feel like they’re genuinely contributing and furthering your cause, along with plenty of other things.

You’ll get the most positive feedback once you’ve fully immersed new donors into your organization’s community and made them feel like part of your team.

Consider these options for obtaining feedback:

- [Send out a survey or poll](#)
- Call donors personally
- Schedule an in-person meeting

Aside from helping your nonprofit better its outreach and donor retention, asking your

donors and supporters for feedback will prove you value their opinions, further strengthening your donor relationships (and avoiding decreases in donor retention rates).

ENGAGE DONORS THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS

You’ve organically grown your donor base with your campaign, but don’t let that peer-to-peer page be the last place donors engage with your organization. After you’ve thanked your donors, you can invite them to visit your organization’s other online platforms.

Include links or buttons to your other profiles on your page; whether it’s your website, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or Pinterest, your donors can learn more about and interact with your organization on their favorite social media platforms.

On your fundraising page, you might also want to include a subscription widget for your email newsletter. Another way to receive updates, your newsletter will keep new supporters (and current ones, too) updated on your organization’s projects and progress, making them feel like part of your nonprofit’s community. You can also let them know about employee matching opportunities or upcoming events.

Want see how your donation is making a difference?

Subscribe to Our Newsletter!

Putting your new supporters at the forefront of your nonprofit's community is a necessity for donor retention. You'll need to be sure to cultivate these relationships by engaging donors through other channels and with reassuring communication. Just make sure you don't ignore your already-loyal donors in this process!

Once they opt in, make a point of asking them what information they want to receive from your organization. One easy way to find out is to send an initial email that lists the content interested parties can sign up to receive. In addition to your newsletter, list the different programs you run, event invitations and reminders, and any other content you send your supporters. Send this email out to each new person who opts in from your event registration form and donation page.

Giving your recipients options empowers your new contacts to specify what information they'd like to receive. Additionally, your nonprofit obtains valuable information about each of these new contacts and their areas of interest, which is useful for segmentation.

OFFER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

If you're in the middle of a fundraising campaign or planning an event, like a walkathon, for example, you may be in need of a few volunteers! And what better way is there to engage supporters than having them volunteer to hand out water or man the donations table at your next fundraiser? If you're hosting a virtual event, you can still offer volunteer opportunities for things like setting up a livestream, assistance with building out your peer-to-peer event page, social ambassador tasks, etc.

After you've included a newsletter subscription widget on your fundraising page, your newsletter will be reaching an even larger donor base. You can send out inquiries for volunteers in your email newsletter or even create a post about it on your website.

Don't forget, you can email supporters who aren't subscribed to your newsletter, like new volunteers that have yet to donate or one-time donors, to see if you can involve them further in your nonprofit's work.

Plus, as you know, one of the most unique attributes of having new donors fundraise for you is the potential to drastically increase your donor base by expanding to your supporters' networks. Expanding your donor base usually leads to more exposure, a larger following, and more contributions.

No matter how you recruit their help, volunteering will put supporters at the heart of your campaign and organization because they'll directly be a part of the change your nonprofit is making.

Improving Peer-to-Peer Participant Retention

We've talked about retaining your peer-to-peer donors... but what about your participants? They're a special breed. They may participate, donate, AND recruit donors to give to your cause. That's a lot! You need to devote some time and resources to retaining these enthusiastic supporters!

One of the best parts of a peer-to-peer fundraiser is meeting people who are so enthusiastic about your mission that they're willing to donate time, energy, and access to their social networks to support you. During your event, you'll pour yourself into building relationships with those people and encouraging them as they raise money for your cause.

But what do you do after the event is over?

How can you continue those relationships and ensure they participate again in the future?



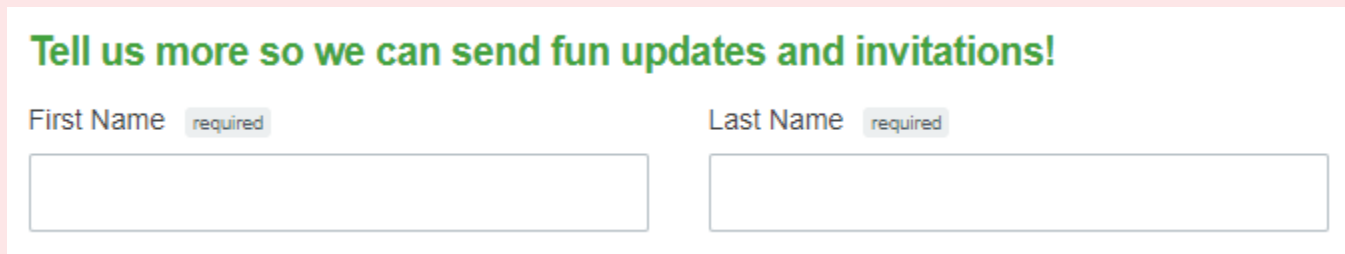
MAKE YOUR SUPPORTERS FEEL AWESOME ABOUT PARTICIPATING

Donors love donating because they feel good about supporting your mission. They donate again when you make them feel great about their first gift. Peer-to-peer participants aren't much different! They feel great about participating in your event because they're supporting a cause they love. They'll participate again if you make them feel amazing about their past participation.

If you want to bring your participants back for future peer-to-peer events, you'll want to make them feel special and valued.

Start making them feel special while they're signing up

Set the tone for your participants' involvement by telling them how much you appreciate their participation even before they get started. Include encouraging messaging on your signup page and reiterate that messaging throughout the registration process. Even simple language changes, like adding "Tell us how we should contact you with fun updates and invitations!" before your personal information fields can make a big difference.



Tell us more so we can send fun updates and invitations!

First Name required

Last Name required

Go the extra mile and make participants feel great before and after they sign up, too. In social posts, emails, and anywhere else you recruit participants, tell potential registrants how they'll make a difference. Then, use your registration confirmation page and email to reiterate the difference they'll make by participating in your event.

Make participating super fun

Pretend you're a participant signing up to raise money for two different organizations. One organization sends you a thank-you email and lets you do your own thing. The other organization sends you a thank-you email, shares fundraising tips and ideas, sends you emails encouraging and thanking you, posts funny updates and shout-outs to their social channels, and rewards you for meeting fundraising goals and milestones.

Which event are you most likely to participate in again the next year?

If you're like most people, you'll probably be more excited about participating in the second event. It's more fun! Engaging your participants, encouraging them, helping them raise money, and rewarding their accomplishments will make raising money for your cause a fun, memorable experience. That kind of experience will be much more enticing to participants when they decide if they want to participate again next year!

Reward engagement

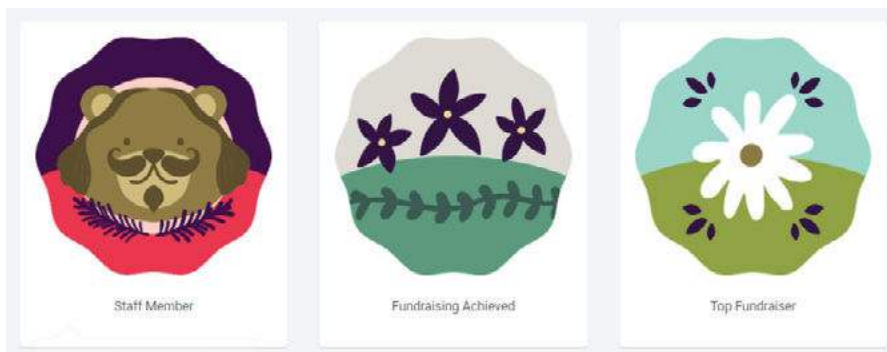
This bears repeating: reward your participants when they engage with you! It's one of the most important ways you can give your participants feelings of achievement and pride. That feeling of being good at something—of meeting a goal or succeeding at a mission—can make or break someone's decision to participate in your events in the future.

Think about your own experiences as a fundraiser. When you land a major gift or meet a goal, wouldn't you love a pat on the back and some high-fives from your friends and colleagues? Wouldn't that make you more confident when it came time for the next ask or campaign? How would you feel if you raised a bunch of money and nobody said a word? Which experience would make you more enthusiastic about asking again?

There are two different ways you can reward engagement: tangible rewards and intangible rewards.

Intangible rewards include things like:

- A digital fundraising badge when participants hit a milestone
- A celebratory email when someone does something amazing
- A shout-out on social media or in your email newsletters/updates
- A phone call to congratulate and encourage a participant.



The Seattle Shakespeare Company created adorable custom badges for staff and participants!

You could also use tangible rewards to recognize participants, like:

- Event merchandise or nonprofit swag for those who meet certain goals
- Raffle tickets to reward meeting milestones
- Admission into special parties or exclusive groups for top fundraisers
- Trophies, medals, or other awards

Many nonprofits do both! Try mixing and matching tangible and intangible items as you work to make your participants feel seen, appreciated, and successful. Remember: the more fun they have and the more confident they feel while participating in this event, the more likely those people will be to participate in future events.

Click here to access the live virtual walk!

The 2020 Walk for Animals is now a virtual fundraising event! *Even though there will be no physical event*, the Walk for Animals will work the same way it always has, so continue sharing, inviting, raising funds, creating teams...just as you always have.

-You'll still get the highly coveted Walk for Animals T-Shirt.

-You'll still earn great new prizes based on how much you raise.

-You'll still get entered in the Passport prize drawing by visiting our vendors and sponsor's websites.

**If you live too far away to pick up the items in our Lakeland office, we can ship the items to you for a donation to cover the shipping costs.*

SPCA Florida offered t-shirts and other prizes to their virtual event participants. They even offered shipping!

Thank your participants throughout the event

You probably show your participants a thank-you message on the event registration page, and you (hopefully) include a thank-you message in the registration confirmation email you send once they're signed up. If you're really on the ball, you send your participants a thank-you email once your peer-to-peer event has come to a close.

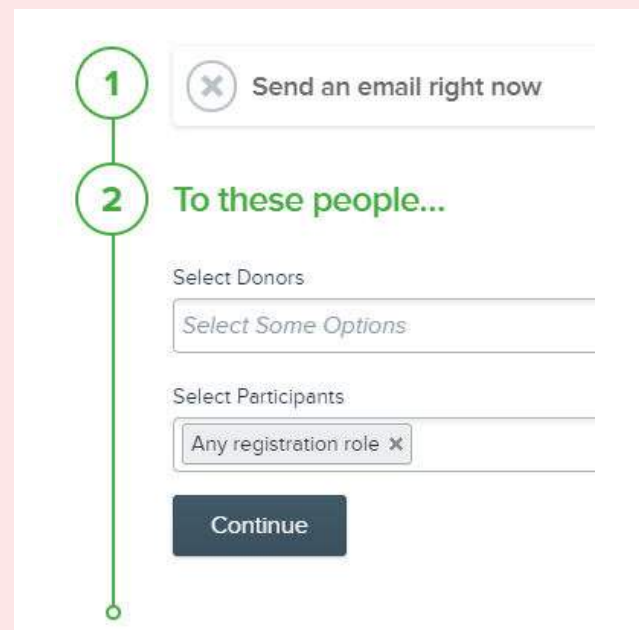
Don't stop there! Thank your participants throughout your event's fundraising period, too. This is especially important if your event includes a fundraising period that spans weeks or months. Your participants' enthusiasm for your event will eventually start to wane over long fundraising periods (don't take it personally, this happens to everyone!). Periodically checking in with participants to thank them for their time and effort and reminding them how important they are can help keep that enthusiasm alive.

When you check in with your participants, make sure your messages include:

- A thank-you note that acknowledges their hard work
- A reminder of the impact they're making (make it as personal as possible!)
- A few words of encouragement

Ogiv by Bloomerang's peer-to-peer platform offers email campaigns that can be sent to participants and donors right from your event control panel! You can schedule or send one-off emails with fundraising tips, encouragement, and more.

The goal here is to try to sustain their enthusiasm and commitment to their involvement as long as possible. You'll make them feel special, show them their hard work is appreciated, and remind them that they're making a difference. When they consider participating in future events, they'll know that you'll value their involvement.



The screenshot shows a two-step process for sending an email campaign. Step 1 is "Send an email right now" with a close button. Step 2 is "To these people..." and includes two selection fields: "Select Donors" with a dropdown menu showing "Select Some Options", and "Select Participants" with a dropdown menu showing "Any registration role" and a close button. A "Continue" button is located at the bottom of the form.

Post-Event Strategies

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR SUPPORTERS AFTER THE EVENT

Have you ever had a friend or family member that's really fun to be around but only seems to contact you when they need something? We all do! It can be annoying, right? Don't be that friend! Instead, work on maintaining your relationship with past participants so they'll be more willing to participate when you ask them to support you again.

Thank them after the event

You might be thinking, "Wow, no kidding. Literally nobody has ever told me to thank participants after the event is over before." But you might be surprised at how few organizations send a real, meaningful thank-you email or letter to people who have raised money on their behalf.

Send your participants a letter or email that thanks them for their time and effort. Be as specific as you can! This isn't the moment for a quick thank-you note that you send to participants and donors alike. Take time to call out all the hard work your participants put into supporting your event—thank them for their time, their creativity, and the effort they put into sharing your event. If your participants hosted their own fundraisers to raise money for you, call that out, too! By being specific, you show your participants that you recognize and admire them for their work. It can also give them ideas for strategies they can use in future events!

If your event is small enough, consider sending individual handwritten notes to your supporters in the days and weeks following the event. Getting your thank-you note the day or so after your event's conclusion will make them feel great—getting a handwritten thank-you after that will knock their socks off.

Communicate participants' impact

As a general rule, people will participate in your peer-to-peer event for two reasons.

1 It's a fun thing to do, especially if it's associated with something like a 5k, scavenger hunt, or other event.

2 They're passionate about your mission and want to do everything they can to support your cause.

You've already learned a little bit about how to make participating in your event fun and memorable, which addresses the first reason. Now it's time to look at how you can show participants that their involvement will make a difference in your community and the world.

If you thanked participants and reiterated their impact throughout your event's fundraising period, this will feel natural to you once your event comes to an end. Continue to communicate that impact in the weeks and months after your event.

- Immediately after the event, send a thank-you letter to your participants
- After the event, calculate how much money your event raised in total (including sponsorships, merchandise sales, raffle tickets, etc.)
- In the week or so after the event, contact your participants to let them know how much the event raised in total and how much of that money was the result of their efforts
- In that same communication, tell your participants what that money will accomplish
- After that, send periodic emails updating participants about what you've done with that money—think along the lines of number of people served, projects achieved, animals adopted out, etc.



This achieves two things for you! One, it keeps participants engaged with you over time. That makes it more likely that they'll get involved to support you again in the future. You're not the friend who only calls when you need something—you're the friend that stays in touch even when you're not asking for a favor. This also shows participants that the money they raised during your event is used wisely to make their community (and the world at large!) a better place. When they're asked to participate in future events, they'll already feel confident that their hard work will have a tangible impact on the world around them.



GIVE THEM OPPORTUNITIES TO STAY INVOLVED BETWEEN EVENTS

Peer-to-peer participants have already proven to you that they believe in your mission. They're about the most highly engaged group of supporters you can have!

Keep that level of engagement going throughout the year by giving those enthusiastic supporters other ways to get involved. There are tons of opportunities to keep them engaged with your work! Here are a few options you can explore:

Invite your participants to other events throughout the year

Do you host donor appreciation events? What about fundraising events? Holiday parties? Whatever you have on your events calendar, keep your peer-to-peer participants on the invitation list. Whether you host virtual events or in-person events (or somewhere in between!), make sure every peer-to-peer participant receives an invitation to participate.

Ask them to be social media ambassadors

Your peer-to-peer participants probably became accustomed to interacting with you on social media as they raised money on your behalf. Use that momentum to your advantage! Ask your participants to serve as brand ambassadors on social media and other channels.

They don't have to do much—responding with a 🧡 or 👍 emoji can boost your post visibility on Facebook, and retweeting your content can expand your reach on Twitter. Ask people to like and share your Instagram posts, too! This is an excellent way to engage participants because they can help you build brand visibility without spending a dime.

This strategy can apply to participants and donors alike. You can even increase participation by incentivizing post sharing and interactions!

Offer volunteer opportunities

For many peer-to-peer participants (especially younger generations!), raising money on an organization's behalf is easier and more accessible than making large donations. They might not have tons of disposable income to donate to your cause, but they can still make a difference by fundraising for you! Tap into that desire to make a difference by offering volunteer opportunities. Giving past participants a way to give back even if they can't make a financial gift will keep them engaged with your mission between events.



Send a post-event survey

Post-event surveys are a great way to wrap up an event, get valuable participant feedback to improve your event, and keep attendees engaged once the event ends. With the right survey tools, creating and sending out a survey is easy. Build your post-event survey on services like Survey Monkey, Typeform, and Google Forms, send a link to your participants via email, then wait for responses to come in.

Crafting the perfect survey questions can be tricky. Be sure to ask questions that are relevant to your event. Questions like these will generate useful feedback:

- How did you hear about the event?
- How would you rate our event on a scale from 1-10 with 10 being the highest rating?
- Was it easy to participate?
- Was it easy to donate during the event?
- What was your favorite part of the event?
- What was your least favorite aspect?
- How can we improve our future events?
- Is there someone you'd like to see presenting at future events?
- How do you prefer we contact you about participating in future events?

Consider asking how likely the participant is to support your cause outside of this event, too. This gauges whether the attendee was motivated by your mission or the event itself. Make note of which attendees claim they'd be likely to support your cause. Segment them into a list and send communications on how they can get more involved.

Participant responses can be a great excuse to get in touch. You can call participants to discuss their feedback and use the opportunity to strengthen your relationship with them.

Create a special group just for them

One of the best parts of participating in a peer-to-peer event is the camaraderie between fundraisers and the feeling of being part of a community that's working toward a common goal. Sustain those feelings by creating a special group for past peer-to-peer participants! It's a great way to introduce participants to each other, learn more about your supporters, and build relationships with people who have already proven to be deeply connected to your cause.

This group can also be a great resource for your staff! As you engage with this group, ask them for feedback and ideas. Wondering if you should try something new at your next event? Who better to ask than people who have already participated in that event? Want to know if you should change up the language in your upcoming campaign? They're practically a ready-made focus group!

People love feeling like they're part of a community, and the sense of exclusivity (only past peer-to-peer participants can join! Wow!) doesn't hurt either. Creating and cultivating this group will also help you with the next big participant retention strategy, which is to...

Get participants hyped about your next peer-to-peer event

At this point, your participants are highly engaged with your organization and already have one peer-to-peer event under their belt. Their last experience as a peer-to-peer fundraiser was a fun and memorable one, and they know exactly how their participation this time around can make a difference. You've kept in touch with them with regular updates, and you've given them lots of opportunities to volunteer or attend other events. On top of all that, you've cultivated relationships by inviting them to an exclusive group of past participants where they can share thoughts, ideas, and feedback. It's time to get them ready to participate in your next peer-to-peer event! Now's the perfect time to:

GET THEM EXCITED ABOUT YOUR UPCOMING EVENT

Your participants had a great time during your last event (right?)—get them excited about your upcoming event! There are tons of fun, creative ways to do this, including:

- Sending a “save-the-date” post card or email
- Sharing event preparation updates on social media
- Giving past participants exclusive sneak peeks at your event (think theme reveal, sneak peeks at event t-shirts or swag, fun videos from event staff, etc.)
- Updating your supporters if you incorporated any of their ideas or feedback in your next event
- Sharing memories, photos, and highlights from past events

There are so many options! Your goal here is to remind past participants how much they loved your last event and get them excited for the next one.



Offer early-access registration

Remember how we talked about people loving to feel like they're part of something exclusive? Capitalize on that by offering early-access registration! Opening your registration to past participants a few days early will give them a head start on customizing their fundraising pages and spreading the word about their participation.

Give them a reduced registration fee or offer a promo code

Many peer-to-peer events include a registration fee, especially if that event involves a 5k or another similar event. Reward past participation by letting supporters register at a lower cost! Send an email to past participants inviting them to register again and include a promo code that will discount the registration fee. You could also explore setting up a private registration package that includes a special t-shirt or other merchandise, then sending that only to your group of past participants. This can serve two purposes! One, it shows past participants that you appreciated their involvement and want to reward them for being loyally supporting your cause. Two, it can make them more enthusiastic fundraisers! After all, you've given them a "gift" by reducing their registration fee or sending them exclusive offers—they'll want to return the favor!



Make them leaders in your event

If your peer-to-peer event strategy includes team fundraising, try making your past participants team captains. At this point, they're seasoned peer-to-peer fundraisers—they know the drill! They'll be comfortable asking for support, customizing their pages, sharing their stories, and generally being all-star fundraisers. That means they'll be able to support other participants who may not be as familiar with those processes.

Not into the team model? That's okay! There are other leadership opportunities. Ask your returning participants to share their own tips and ideas that made them successful last time. Their experience can be a big help to new fundraisers! You could also ask returning fundraisers to be points of contact for new participants who have questions or need ideas and inspiration.

Prep participants with what they need

Another engagement strategy leading up to the next event is to reach out to top fundraising participants from last year's event. Invite them to mentor new fundraising participants and share their fundraising tips. Not every new fundraising participant is going to know how to fundraise well. Pairing up a new participant with a veteran fundraising participant can help grow donations and build a bond that keeps new fundraising participants and their mentors coming back for years.

You can also ask past participants what they need to raise more funds for your nonprofit. Are there resources they're missing? Do they need tips on how to ask friends and family to donate? Do they need instructions on how to create a Facebook fundraiser for your event? Determine what fundraisers' needs are and build resources around them. Those resources will not only help your organization raise more money during your peer-to-peer event, you'll also build your fundraisers' confidence, which means they'll put in more effort.

Retaining your past participants takes work, but that work pays off

You spend tons of time, effort, and money recruiting participants for your peer-to-peer events. Just as retaining donors is more cost-effective than constantly acquiring new ones, retaining your peer-to-peer participants from event to event is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones every year. Keeping your participants engaged during the year takes some work, but that effort pays off!

People who raise money for you have worked hard to raise money for your cause, expand your donor base by reaching people in their social networks, and raised your nonprofit's visibility in your community. They've proven that they're dedicated to your mission, and they're some of the most engaged supporters you can have! Keep that engagement rolling by making them feel amazing for participating, showing them the impact they made on the world, and cultivating relationships with them all year. That sets the stage for their involvement in future events, where they can naturally step into positions of leadership and encourage other fundraisers to be as engaged as they are.

Watch Your Retention Efforts Pay Off

You're now prepared to proactively steward your peer-to-peer participants and event donors!

The more involved your participants and event donors become, the more likely you'll retain them between events. Take extra care in your communications to ensure long-term commitment and loyalty. Engaging your regular participants and those who give to fundraisers' campaigns can keep them returning event after event for years.

Happy retaining!

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