## Using Social Media and Your Website to Enrich Your Fundraising Appeal

A fundraising letter — either print or electronic — is just one piece of an individual donor campaign to individual donors. Here are some suggestions for using all the tools in your toolbox:

* Your website should clearly convey information about what your organization does, and it should provide visitors with concrete ways to get involved with your work. Although you should clearly and directly ask for contributions (and make sure your online donation feature is easy to use), you should do more than just ask for money. Invite visitors to join you in your mission by volunteering, writing letters, signing petitions, and other worthy actions on behalf of your cause.
* Be sure your website and emails are compatible with smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices.
* Sign up with a service provider to maintain your email list and format your emails and newsletters. Their knowledge of what works online can save you many hours of frustration.
* Use email solicitations and newsletters to drive visitors to your website. Think of your tools as methods to sustain a conversation and build a relationship.
* Online giving is growing, but gifts contributed through the Internet still make up a relatively low percentage of all charitable contributions. While turning your attention to online fundraising, don’t turn your back on such traditional methods of mail, in-person visits, and events.
* If your website has a blog, post news and opinions on a regular basis. Tweet your blog postings to reinforce your message and online presence.
* If you have a Facebook page, invite supporters on your email list to “friend” and “like” your organization. Update the page on a regular schedule and remember that photographs generally draw more attention than text-only messages.
* A powerful, essential feature of online and social media is that they’re fast (so much faster than snail mail). They’re your best tools for urgent messages.
* Social media is all about — you guessed it — being social. As you connect with your organization’s friends, invite them to be active allies and help you spread the word about your work.
* Don’t hide out in the online world. From time to time, arrange in-person events so you can get some face time with online associates and recognize them for their generosity.

The objective is to create multiple points of contact with your organization. Over time, you’ll learn which methods work best with which donors. That doesn’t mean you’ll remove a donor from your email list (unless he asks to be removed) just because he sent a check in an envelope. Raising money is all about relationships, right? Try to build the richest, best-connected relationships possible for your nonprofit.