

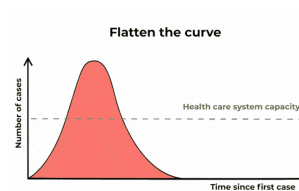
FUNDRAISING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 WHAT TO DO NOW!

The ViTreo Team

March 17th, 2020

We are in the
midst of an
unprecedented
event that has
and will affect

all of us in many ways. We are
concerned about you, and the
personal safety and security of
your staff, clients, volunteers,



Credit: [ScienceAlert](#)



19 have been dramatic and direct.
It is clear that the global economy

will undergo significant volatility
for some time.

Nonprofit organizations are
uniquely vulnerable. Most operate
with tight margins and are
dependent on fundraising and the
generosity and support of donors.
Not all have reserves or a strong
balance sheet to fall back on. The
sector needs to quickly implement
strategies to support our donors
and stabilize fundraising revenue.
ViTreo is and will continue to
assess the situation. We are
curating information, ideas, and
input from many sources. This is
an ongoing process and there is so
much out there. We will publish the
very best of these over our various
communications and social
media feeds.

**Right now, today, we are focusing
on what to do in the immediate
short term.** What can you do now
to stabilize your organization,



support your donors, and steady your fundraising? In future posts we will talk about medium and

longer term strategies... but for now.. here is our advice as of March 17 2020.

NOTE: This is a rapidly changing situation. New developments may yield entirely new advice applicable to your specific circumstance or for all fundraising situations. Your situation may be unique and not applicable to this general advice. Our advice is meant as a general guide. We hope you find it helpful.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES TO KEEP TOP OF MIND:

1. Your donors, volunteers and staff are all experiencing a time of uncertainty
2. They are likely at home and generally available more than usual
3. You can expect more reliance on or connection to social media
4. They may be ready and

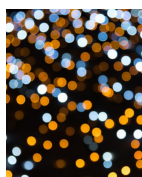


the appeal *and being careful to not be insensitive to their situation*, we owe it to our

organizations and our mission to ask our staff, our volunteers, and our donors for help

5. They are also interested in the COVID-19 issue and its outcomes...and they are your donors so they are interested in how your services, staff and clients are being affected; this could be an opportunity, *if presented at the right time and in the right way*

6. Always follow the direction of your local health authority, government and your organization's guidance to keep your clients safe. Safety and security of all involved is the #1 priority.



Above all,
we recommend that you
do not immediately cancel
your fundraising events!

Postpone, reschedule or
create a non-event event,
but do not cancel events.



NONPROFIT

IN THE SHORT TERM

Above all, we recommend that you do not immediately cancel your fundraising events! Postpone or reschedule events, do not cancel events. If you outright cancel events, you lose the opportunity for this year and you may lose the donor or sponsor to another organization. Try to maintain some continuity by rescheduling the event. The outright cancellation of an event is an early reaction that will have long term impacts. It is the equivalent of closing a store for a year for your constituents.

We recommend that you activate and significantly increase your social media now!

- Tell your story by focusing on the people involved or affected; this situation is about the people more than the virus
- Relationships are always at the forefront: emphasize the

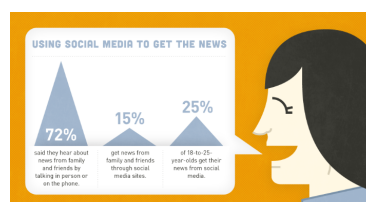


your clients, donors,
volunteers, staff and express
genuine concern about the
impact COVID-19 may be
having on them and their
families

- Focus on front-line impacts
(e.g. the workers helping
your clients), give shout outs,
or kudos to your team who
are there for those you serve
- Tag some donors or
sponsors who have been
amazing in recent years and
acknowledge how their gifts
are helping you now in this
time (and at other times) —
share the story of the
difference it made
- Highlight pressing or
emerging needs as they
develop
- Develop the story line about
how responsive your
organization continues to be
and any impacts this is
having; examples might
include:

to have visitors, adding
to staff loads

- Animals not being adopted as readily, requiring more foster care
- Volunteers not able to physically help
- More calls to emergency or distress lines due to mental health concerns
- Engage with donors and donor organizations on social media; join the conversation
- Be sure to respond to comments and online messages; keep the conversation active and interesting.





**We recommend that you don't
change your fundraising program**

**but consider amending your
approach.**

- Your needs haven't changed, and they have possibly increased; urgency is when fundraising is most important
- Keep your current plans in place but assess the impact of forced event cancellations or the new economic environment with the assessment matrix (see below).
- Review the situation constantly, this will help you keep connected to your constituents; if constituents ask, tell them the impact, as they need to know.
 - Again, please resist the urge to cancel all fundraising! Consider alternatives, including:
returning



non-event event) or
rescheduling (but not
cancelling) events

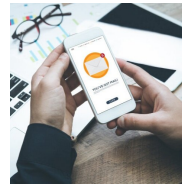
- Reissue direct mail or
e-appeals with updated
messaging
- Reassess your social
media tenor, approach,
content, and frequency
- Re-evaluate and, if
necessary, re-position
your fundraising
priorities
- Keep the donors and clients
your organization serves at
the forefront of all decisions,
strategies, and
communications; continue to
speak to your donors and
prospective donors about
your clients; as part of that
conversation, do not say "I
expect that with the COVID-
19 you are reconsidering
your giving"; if that is said in
any piece, it will likely result
in a significantly lower
response.



donor-centered email with some of your near-term organizational plans and needs. Doing this soon

will show you are prepared for emergencies and that you have plans. Donors are often impressed with the reality of a strong response.

- During your communications, take the time to prepare and review your communications: it is easy to accidentally mismanage communications in a time of rapid change and uncertainty
- Communicate about how your donors have helped you, and what you are doing to help your clients in this time
- Identify areas where people can help (e.g.



- Where possible, tell tangible stories (with real people) about the impact of this crisis on your programs and clients in your calls for support; many times, your organization and the people who rely on you are affected in ways that aren't obvious to a donor
- Remember, this is not about you! It is about how a donor can help even one of your clients and the people and the community your organization serves

Ramp up stewardship. You can use technology to prepare a video for your supporters about what you are doing.

- We and our donors have so much available technology in our pocket to deliver some



connections.

- Where possible
personalize the
message. A video for a
member or donor who
has been a big
supporter in the past
may be welcomed.
- Ask volunteers to help,
as they may be ready to
do something from
home, since they may
not be able to go to
their regular volunteer
shift.



**These are extraordinary times and
what we are doing is not easy. At
ViTreo, we are here to help and we
will continue to offer support and
advice. We hope that we all
emerge from this very difficult
time with more resilience and with
an even greater focus on our**



We are here to help. Call on us if you would like help with your fundraising programs and strategy as we all journey through this difficult time together.

Leaders in our sector have pulled together and developed some amazing resources. You can find links to these resources on our website at this link: [Fundraising in the time of COVID-19: Advice from leaders in the sector.](#)



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