NONPROFIT BEST PRACTICES: GOAL SETTING

#GIVINGTUESDAY
Party on!
If you’re a fundraiser, you’re seeing news about #GivingTuesday everywhere. And the buzz is for good reason – #GivingTuesday is not only the launch of the giving season, but has become an international celebration of generosity. And your donors, prospects, staff and volunteers are likely to be hearing a lot about the big day – from you or someone. So, it’s time to solidify your #GivingTuesday plans.

#GivingTuesday, when done well, can have all the excitement and engagement of a great party, while building awareness and donations for your cause. It can also carry good feelings forward through the December giving season to boost your overall year-end fundraising efforts.

What will make it a great day?
Like a great party, the secrets to #GivingTuesday success combine great planning with a little magic. And like a party theme, your campaign goal is the part of the plan from which everything else stems.
If you ran a #GivingTuesday campaign last year, you have a benchmark against which to think about 2015. If you’re in your first year, setting goals will be an educated best guess.

Dollars are likely to be one of the key elements you measure, but it doesn’t need to be your only goal. These are a few goals to consider instead of, or in addition to, funds raised:
- Number of donors
- Number of new donors
- Number of volunteers/hours (if you are including an activity)
- Number of recurring donors
- % Participation among key groups – like staff
- New social media followers

**Build a pyramid**

Even if you don’t have prior experience with #GivingTuesday, you can do some predictive planning around logical paths to your goals. Giving pyramids are a simple way to add a quantitative element to planning your dollar goal. They let you sanity check your goal by putting it on paper, rather than just guessing.

How do you build a giving pyramid?

Let’s take one example: Your nonprofit would like to raise $50,000 on #GivingTuesday. (If you’re a small nonprofit, eliminate zeroes from this example.)

Below is an illustration of how to predict a path to success with a giving pyramid:
- $50,000 Goal
- 8,500 donors in data file
- 255 Donors if you achieve 3% participation (and you’ll definitely attract new donors too, so this should be a safe bet)

Now create your own giving pyramid and think it through. If it feels ambitious but achievable, then it is a great place to start. If it seems too easy to achieve, boost the dollar amount. Too much of a stretch? Dial back.

Once your goal is set, share it with your staff, board, ambassadors and throughout your campaign and invite them all to be part of your #GivingTuesday party.