



ONLINE FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS

Making the Most of Email and Social Media

Virtual campaigns can help you and your chapter raise significant amounts of fundraising with less effort than large fundraising events. With some clear messaging, a large enough audience and persistence, anyone can be successful. Here are some basic tips to be successful. See page two for sample messages.

Build a large target audience.

- **Do the math.** Set your goal and work backwards based on likelihood of success. From a recent review of peer-to-peer fundraisers, roughly 1 in 5 people who were asked to give at least twice donated. Therefore if your goal is to get 25 donors, you need to start with a list of around 125 people and expect to send out 250 or more messages to hit your goal.
- Pull together anyone that you can think of that may be willing to chip in towards your goal; family, friends, neighbors, employers, professors, people your parents work with. Be as thorough as you can in building out the list. If you don't have emails for some of these people but you know others do, see if they are able to either share them with you or forward your message to them.
- If you are fundraising as a chapter, try to focus on audiences that won't have as much overlap. For those that will (like friends of the fraternity, professors, etc) figure out who is best suited to send the message based on who will be more likely to get a positive response.

Have direct, clear, compelling messaging.

- **Be direct.** Whether via email or social media, mass messaging to multiple recipients get far less response than a direct message to one person at a time. For emails, send one email directly to one person or couple, using mail merge if you can. For social media, you can post to your account, but more success will come if you direct message people you want to donate.
- **Make them the hero.** Rather than putting yourself or the organization at the center of your appeal, ask them to make a difference for the beneficiaries of your cause. "Your support can increase accessibility for people with disabilities" can inspire more action than "Ability Experience increases accessibility for people with disabilities".
- **Articulate the cause.** Don't just tell people what organization you're fundraising for, share what purpose it serves. Utilize the sample email below and go to our website to see simple ways to describe the cause and it's impact on those we serve.
- **Make a clear ask.** Your subject line and the message itself should both contain a clear call to action; don't simply state that you are fundraising, ask them directly if they can support you and include clear direction on how they can do it.

Be persistent.

- **Following up will triple success.** The average open rate for emails is 13%-40% depending on the sender, the platform and the audience. If you're using email it's important to understand that much of your audience may not open it at first, and even if they do, may not respond right away. You are twice as likely to get a positive response if you send a follow up message to people who didn't reply to your initial message.
- **Don't assume no response is a 'no'.** In today's world, people communicate through more platforms than ever and are bombarded with ads and appeals. Human psychology hasn't changed much, however. According to numerous studies, it takes a human around 7 touchpoints on average to absorb a message enough to act on it. Therefore, you can't necessarily expect all your supporters to come from your first contact with them. Do not be afraid to send a follow up email, DM through a different social media channel or call / text if you didn't get a reply to your first message.

Sample Email 1:

Dear (Name),

Did you know that more than 1 in 5 Americans lives with a disability? For many people living with disabilities, lack of accessibility and isolation can often create challenges to daily life. With everything going on in the world due to COVID-19, those barriers have only gotten worse. **I need your help to make a difference.**

Through Ability Experience, I'm able to have an impact on people with disabilities through accessibility construction, local volunteerism, national programs and grants for partner organizations. Your support can help build community, one relationship at a time, where the abilities of all people are recognized and valued. **This Saturday, I'm taking part in a Virtual Ability Experience Challenge, running a 5k to support the organization (insert your action or event).** I have a goal of raising **\$500 (your goal)** to make the impact real. Will you help me reach the finish line? I know that times are tough for many people at the moment so I greatly appreciate any donation you could make!

Can you help support my goal with a donation of \$25, \$50 or even \$100? To give your support, you can go to my fundraising page here (**insert link**).

Thank you,

(your name and contact info)

PS: To learn more about Ability Experience, you can visit www.abilityexperience.org

Sample Email 2:

Dear _____,

Each semester my fraternity, Pi Kappa Phi, supports our national organization called The Ability Experience, which is an independent-nonprofit dedicated to aiding the 6.5 million citizens living with disabilities across the United States. The Ability Experience works to create a community where the abilities of all people are equally recognized and valued through inclusivity- challenging society's language and perception of individuals with disabilities. Our chapter is honored to be able to support an organization that is dedicated to raising awareness, fundraising, volunteering, and promoting the message that disability does not mean inability. To learn more about The Ability Experience, here is the [link](#) to the official website.

As a chapter we always look to improve our fundraising efforts, which allows us to increase our overall impact. With your help we hope to meet and exceed this year's goal of **\$20,000(your goal)**. This fraternity has helped me strive to be a better person and has shaped me into the young man I am today. For this reason, I feel it is my duty to give back by helping the fraternity fundraise for those who don't have the same opportunities as I do.

Pi Kappa Phi at **(your university)** greatly appreciates any donation that you would be able to provide for The Ability Experience. The link below will bring you straight to our donation page. Thank you for all of your support!

Best,

(your name)

(yours Chapter Classy Link)