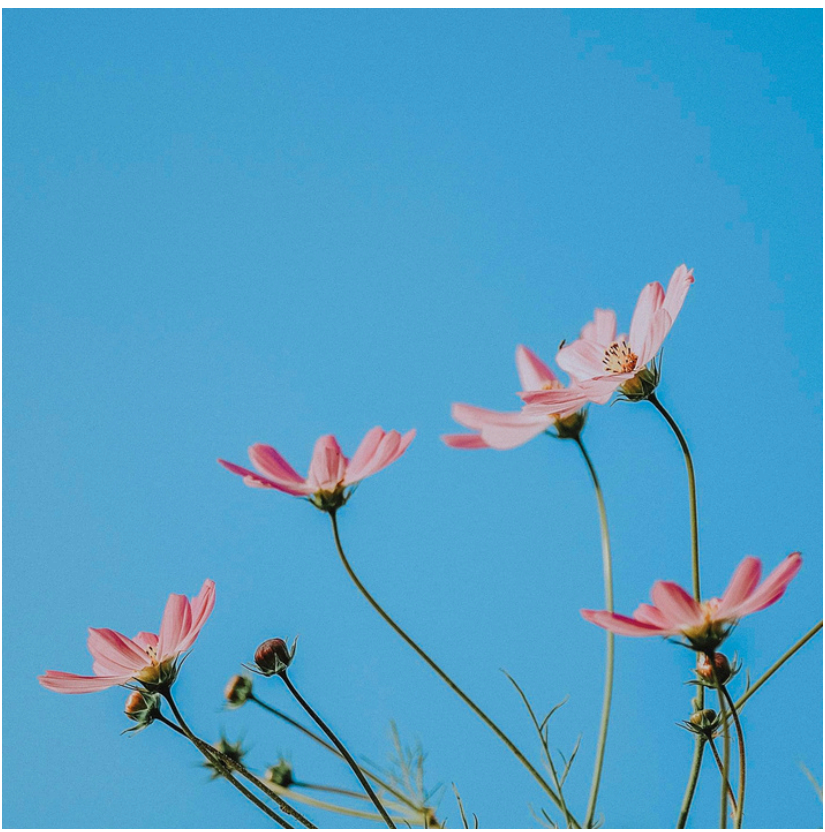
powered by connectionpoint

Growth Engine

The six steps to amplify your nonprofit's impact



“When communication is done right, a donation is just a side effect”

– Daryl Hatton, Founder, ConnectionPoint

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in this guide!

It has been carefully crafted with the needs and unique characteristics of nonprofits in mind.

The Growth Engine Methodology, which this guide explores, is the result of many years of **work and experience** with nonprofit fundraisers.

We've distilled the tips, best practices, and use cases we've gathered over the years into one methodology: a practical system you can implement to **amplify your nonprofit's impact**.

Online fundraising is no longer simply a matter of putting up a donation page and asking people to give.

It requires a **system** that moves people from awareness to engagement, from engagement to action, and from action to advocacy.

That's what this methodology is all about.

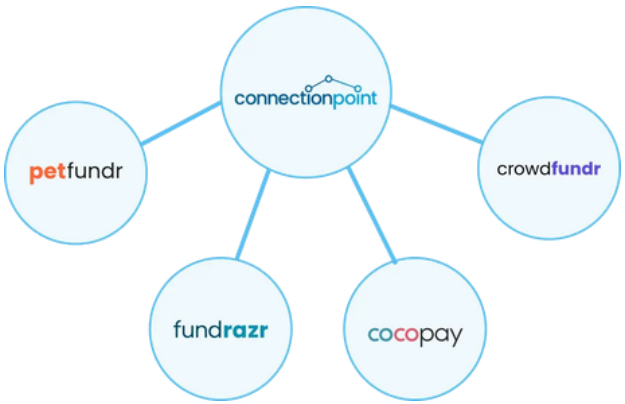
About ConnectionPoint

ConnectionPoint is the next-generation technology that powers digital fundraising platforms to help organizations, businesses, and individuals create a **positive impact in the world**.

We ease the process of collaborative funding to be more engaging and socially integrated. Our solution offers a rare balance of powerful crowdfunding paired with affordability and effortless usability.

ConnectionPoint is dedicated to provide the **best-in-class collaborative funding technology** to make a positive social impact.

We tap and strengthen the goodwill that exists in this world by helping everyone **tell their stories and fund their cause.**



Making the most of this guide

This guide is divided into **two sections:** a theoretical section and a practical section.

In the first section, each page focuses on one of the **six stages** of the Growth Engine and answers three key questions:

WHY does this stage matter?

WHAT does this stage mean?

HOW to implement it?

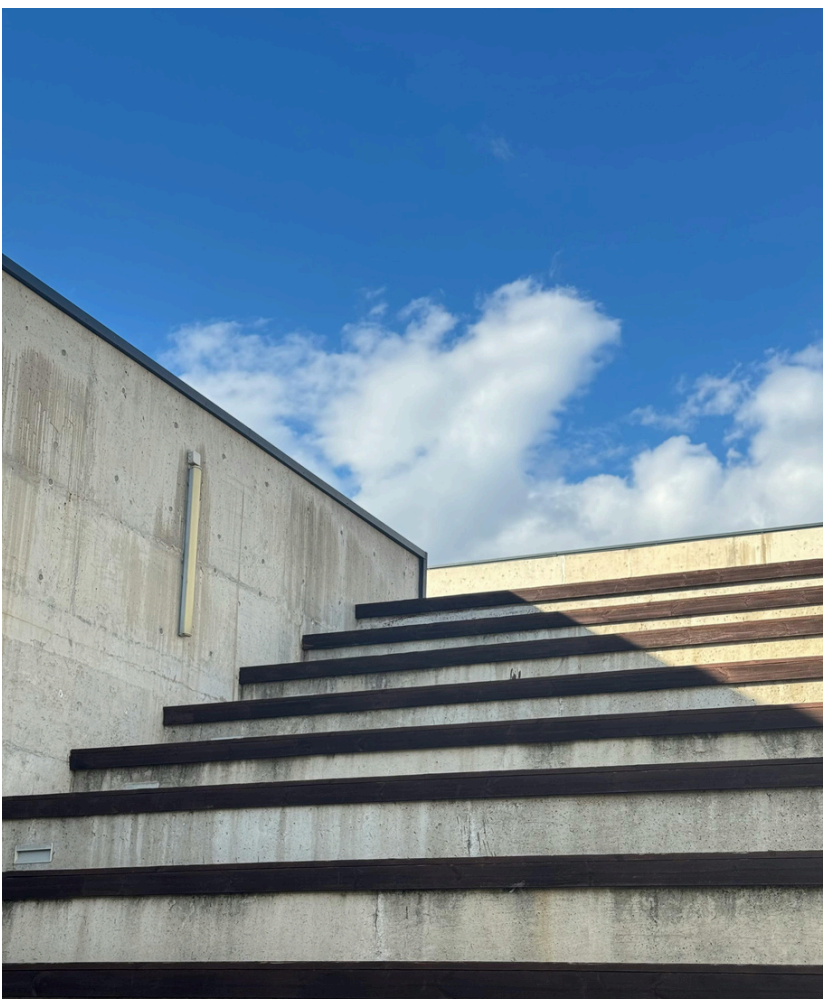
The goal is not to execute every tactic available. Instead, it is to identify the channels, messages, stories, and donor experiences that work best for your organization. Then repeat, refine, and improve them over time.

The second section is a **workbook** designed to help you put what you've learned into practice. Print it out, sit down with your team or work through it on your own, grab your favorite pen, and start filling it in. The workbook will help you move beyond simply learning the methodology and begin implementing it in your nonprofit.

Enjoy the journey, and let's get started!

Methodology

Knowledge behind successful fundraising

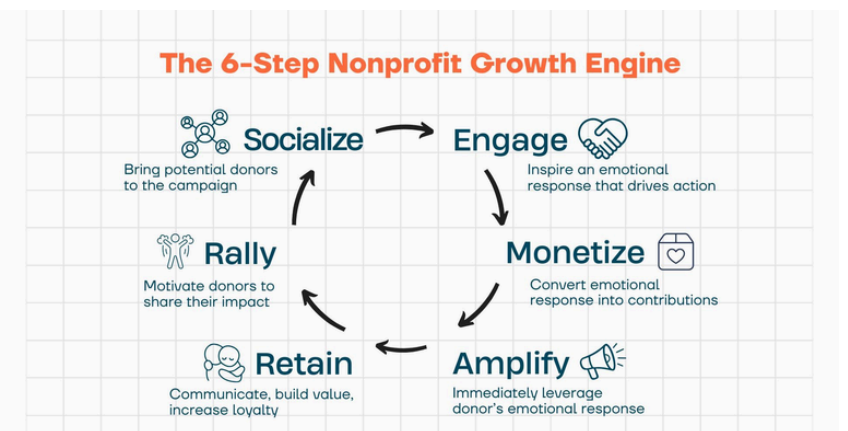


Growth Engine is a repeatable methodology designed to help nonprofits build a more effective and sustainable approach to fundraising.

Rather than treating each campaign as a one-time effort, it views fundraising as a **continuous cycle** of building relationships, creating meaningful connections, inspiring action, and strengthening the community around your mission.

The methodology brings together the different elements that contribute to fundraising success and helps organizations understand how they work together to **create momentum.**

It is not a rigid formula or a checklist of tactics; it should be **adapted to your organization**, your audience, and the channels and stories that resonate with your supporters. As you apply it, learn what works, improve it, and repeat the cycle, allowing each campaign to build on the one before it.



Step 1: Socialize

Build your audience before you ask for a donation

WHY?

Your fundraising campaign cannot succeed if people don't know it exists.

A common mistake is to build a campaign page, publish it, and wait for people to find it. But a campaign page is only the destination. Socialize is how you bring people there.

The goal is to create awareness across the audiences and channels your nonprofit already has access to, and to begin building anticipation before the campaign launches.

If you don't generate enough awareness, even the strongest story and most compelling fundraising offer will struggle.

WHAT?

Socialize means deliberately distributing your campaign to the people and communities most likely to care about your mission. Think beyond "promoting the campaign". You are building a network of awareness around the campaign.

This can include:

- Your website
- Email lists
- Social media
- Existing donors
- Volunteers
- Closed communities
- Partners
- Staff and board networks
- Your physical locations
- Other communities connected to your mission



Use our platform's "Communicate" feature to keep your community informed, engaged, and connected.

The stage should also begin before launch. Pre-launch communication can warm up potential supporters so they're ready to engage when the campaign goes live.

HOW?

1. **Map your audiences.** Identify everyone who could potentially help your campaign succeed. Think in terms of: Who already knows us? Who cares about this issue? Who has a relationship with our beneficiaries? Who can introduce us to new audiences?

2. **Map your channels.** For each audience, determine the best way to reach them. For example: Existing donors - Email, Volunteers - Email + private groups, General supporters - Social media, Website visitors - Website banner/pop-up, Partners - Direct outreach, Local community - Events + physical materials.

3. **Start before launch.** Create anticipation with save-the-date messages, campaign previews, countdown content, behind-the-scenes stories, early announcements, "coming soon" communications, launch-day reminders.

4. **Make the campaign easy to find.** Every relevant communication should give people a clear path to the campaign. Don't make supporters search for it.

THE OUTCOME

At the end of Socialize, the right people should know:

What is happening → Why it matters → Where to learn more

Now you have their attention. The next challenge is turning attention into connection. That's Engage.

Step 2: Engage

Give people a reason to care

WHY?

Awareness doesn't automatically create action. Someone can see your campaign and still feel nothing. Engagement happens when people see themselves, someone they care about, or something they believe in within your story.

That is why storytelling is at the heart of this stage.

If people don't emotionally connect with the problem, they have little reason to continue toward a donation.

WHAT?

Engage means turning attention into emotional and intellectual connection.

Your campaign needs to answer: Why should I care?

A strong story connects four things:
The person → The problem → The solution → The supporter

The supporter shouldn't feel like an observer. They should be able to see how they can become part of the solution.

The story should be:

- Simple
- Genuine
- Emotional
- Human
- Easy to understand



Embed videos and easily create engaging galleries and slideshows in the "Content" section of our platform.

HOW?

1. **Start with a person.** Whenever appropriate, put a real human experience at the center. Instead of beginning with: "Our organization has been serving the community for 25 years...", begin with the person or situation your campaign exists to change.

2. **Make the need tangible.** Don't assume people understand the problem. Show them what is happening, who is affected, why it matters, what happens if nothing changes.

3. **Introduce the solution.** Once people understand the problem, explain what your organization can do about it. Keep it concrete.

4. **Give the supporter a role.** Connect the donor to the outcome. The story should move from: "This is a problem" to: "Together, we can change this".

5. **Use the right storytelling formats.** Consider short videos, photography, personal stories, testimonials, quotes, behind-the-scenes content, beneficiary stories, progress stories.

6. **Keep testing the story.** Look at which stories and formats generate the strongest response. Your audience is telling you what they care about through its behavior.

THE OUTCOME

At the end of Engage, people should be able to say:

"I understand the problem, I care about it, and I want to help".

Now you have an opportunity to turn that connection into action. That's Monetize.

Step 3: Monetize

Make the impact of giving concrete

WHY?

People may care deeply about your mission and still not donate. The missing link is often clarity.

People need to understand what their contribution will actually accomplish. Monetize is the point where emotional connection becomes a concrete opportunity to create change.

Without this connection, "Please donate" can feel abstract.

WHAT?

Monetize means making the value and impact of giving tangible. The question you need to answer is: "What will my donation make possible?"

Instead of focusing only on the amount of money you need, connect giving to outcomes.

For example:
- $50 → provides X
- $100 → enables Y
- $500 → makes Z possible

The specific amounts and outcomes must be based on your organization's real costs and programs.

The goal is not to manufacture a story around the numbers. The goal is to translate a financial contribution into meaningful impact.



Create donation tiers with descriptions and images in the "Rewards" section of our platform.

HOW?

1. **Identify your real impact units.** Work backward from your programs. What does it actually cost to create a meaningful outcome? Identify several examples that are both financially accurate and easy for donors to understand.

2. **Create giving levels.** Give people different ways to participate. For example: entry-level gift, mid-level gift, major gift, project-level gift. Each level should communicate a meaningful outcome.

3. **Show the impact.** Use real photographs, personal stories, program examples, behind-the-scenes content, testimonials, progress toward goals.

4. **Make the ask obvious.** Once people understand the impact, don't make them figure out what to do. Give them a clear next step: Donate now.

5. **Remove friction.** Review the donation experience from the donor's perspective. Ask: Is the donation button obvious? Are suggested amounts helpful? Is the process easy? Does the donor understand what happens after giving? Can they complete the donation quickly?

THE OUTCOME

At the end of Monetize, the supporter should understand:
"My contribution can make this specific difference".

That turns interest into action.

But the donation shouldn't be the end of the interaction. It's the beginning of Amplify.

Step 4: Amplify

Turn donors into a new distribution channel

WHY?

Your organization has an audience. Your donors have audiences too.

When someone gives to your campaign, you have an opportunity to reach beyond the people you could reach on your own. Amplify turns supporters into an extension of your distribution network.

If you don't ask, many people simply won't share.

WHAT?

Amplify means giving your supporters a simple way to introduce your campaign to their own networks.

The basic mechanism is:
Donor → Share → New audience → New potential supporter

You are no longer relying entirely on your organization's reach. Your community becomes part of your reach.

The important principle is simple:

Make sharing an explicit part of the donor journey.



Make it easy to share your campaign on social media with the "Share" feature on our platform.

HOW?

1. **Ask immediately.** Include the sharing invitation directly in the post-donation experience. Don't wait weeks.

2. **Make the ask specific.** Instead of "please share our campaign" try "help us reach five more people who care about this cause". A specific action is easier to understand.

3. **Make sharing easy.** Provide share buttons, suggested social copy, images, short videos, email language, campaign links. Remove as much effort as possible.

4. **Give people a story to share.** People are more likely to share something meaningful than a generic fundraising request. Give them a reason:
"I just supported this campaign because..."
"Here's what we're trying to accomplish..."
"Here's why this matters to me..."

5. **Expand beyond social media.** Think about friends and family, volunteers, community groups, partners, peer fundraisers, schools, businesses, professional networks.

THE OUTCOME

At the end of Amplify, your campaign should have reached people who were not originally part of your audience.

Some of those people will become new supporters.

And your original donors are now ready for the next stage. That's Retain.

Step 5: Retain

Show donors what their support accomplished

WHY?

A donation is not the end of a donor relationship, it's the beginning.

One of the easiest mistakes for a nonprofit to make is to focus so heavily on acquiring the next donor that it forgets to communicate with the people who already supported the mission.

Retention builds trust, loyalty, and the foundation for future giving.

WHAT?

Retain means closing the loop between a donor's contribution and the impact it created.

The donor should be able to answer:
"What happened because I gave?"

This is more than a thank-you email, it's an ongoing relationship.

The basic sequence is:
Give → Thank → Update → Show impact → Stay connected

Your supporters should feel informed and not forgotten.



Automate thank-you messages and share updates with your community through the "Communicate" section.

HOW?

1. **Thank people.** Acknowledge the contribution quickly and genuinely. Make the donor feel that their participation matters.

2. **Keep them updated.** Use campaign updates, email, social media, photos, video, progress reports.

3. **Show results.** Don't just say: "Thank you for your support". Show: "Here's what your support helped us accomplish". Results make the relationship tangible.

4. **Share progress, not just success.** Supporters can handle honest updates. If something takes longer than expected or circumstances change, communicate that. Transparency builds credibility.

5. **Keep the relationship going.**

Invite donors to:
- Follow your organization
- Subscribe to updates
- Attend events
- Volunteer
- Participate in future campaigns
- Give again
- Share stories

THE OUTCOME

At the end of Retain, the donor should feel:
"I'm glad I supported this organization, and I want to stay connected".

Now you have something more valuable than a one-time donor. You have a supporter who knows your impact.

And that's the perfect foundation for the final stage. That's Rally.

Step 6: Rally

Turn supporters into advocates

WHY?

People trust people.

When a supporter tells their own network what happened because they gave, the message carries a different kind of credibility than an organization simply promoting itself.

Rally turns satisfied supporters into advocates. This creates the bridge back to the beginning of the Growth Engine.

WHAT?

Rally means mobilizing your supporters to advocate for your mission and bring new people into the community. The difference between Amplify and Rally is important.

Amplify - "I donated. You should check this out".
Rally - "Look what happened because we supported this".

Rally is powered by proof of impact. Your supporter has experienced the journey:
I cared → I gave → I saw the result → I want others to be part of this.

That creates advocacy. Those advocates can bring new people into Step 1.



Create custom links and track campaign traffic using the "Referrals" section on our platform.

HOW?

1. **Show the outcome.** Give supporters something real to talk about. Share results, milestones, beneficiary stories, photos, videos, transformational moments, "you made this possible" stories.

2. **Ask them to share again.** Don't assume advocacy will happen automatically. Invite it. For example: "You helped make this possible. Share what happened with someone who should know about our mission".

3. **Make advocacy easy.** Give supporters shareable stories, images, videos, quotes, impact statistics, suggested messages, links.

4. **Recognize advocates.** Identify the people who consistently share, fundraise, volunteer, introduce others, give repeatedly, speak about your mission. Give these people meaningful ways to stay involved.

5. **Bring new people into the engine.** The ultimate purpose of Rally is not simply more social media activity. It's new relationships.

When an advocate introduces someone to your organization, that person enters the next cycle: Socialize → Engage → Monetize → Amplify → Retain → Rally

THE OUTCOME

Your supporters become part of your growth system.

Your organization isn't constantly starting from zero.

Each campaign creates:

More supporters → More advocates → More reach → More supporters

Workbook

Putting knowledge into practice



Exercise #1: Our Roots

Finding the story people want to join and share

Core purpose and positioning

1. Our Why

We exist because

If we disappeared tomorrow, what would the world lose?

2. The People We're Here For

We help

The community we care most deeply about is:

3. Why People Care

They care because

The emotional reason someone might fall in love with this cause is:

4. Our Proof

We are most proud of

What story best proves that our work matters?

5. Our Opportunity

What could we accomplish if more people knew about us?

What is currently getting in the way?

Exercise #1: Our Roots

Finding the story people want to join and share

Core purpose and positioning

6. The Unlock

We believe the key to growing our impact is:

The one thing we most need more people to understand is:

7. Our Nonprofit in One Sentence

If we had to invite someone to join us, we'd say:

"Join us to

8. Make It Contagious

Why would someone want to tell a friend about this?

"You have to hear about

9. The People Who Could Help Us Spread It

Who has the passion, credibility, or connections to help others discover it?

10. Our First Invitation

If we asked one of those people to help us spread the word, what is the smallest, most natural thing we could ask them to do?

Exercise #2: Our Channels

Where should we communicate?

1. Where is our audience? Where do the people we want to reach naturally spend their time and attention?

- Offline:
- Social media:
- Email / newsletters:
- Communities / forums / groups:
- Events / organizations / networks:
- Other:

2. Where Can We Communicate?

Now look at the organization's actual ecosystem.

Channel	Do we have it?	How strong is it?*	Why?
Website	☐	*Strong / Medium / Weak*	
Email	☐	*Strong / Medium / Weak*	
Instagram	☐	*Strong / Medium / Weak*	
Facebook	☐	*Strong / Medium / Weak*	
LinkedIn	☐	*Strong / Medium / Weak*	
Events	☐	*Strong / Medium / Weak*	
Other	☐	*Strong / Medium / Weak*	

**Strong channel means we have an audience here + we know how to reach them + we can consistently create content for it.*

Exercise #2: Our Channels

Where do these two circles overlap?

A. Our audience naturally spends time here.
B. We are capable of communicating effectively here.

Where they overlap = our priority channels.

Our 3 priority communication channels:

#1
Why:
#2
Why:
#3
Why:

What format works best for each?

Priority channel	Our strongest format

Where should we NOT spend our energy?

Exercise #3: Our Story

What story are we telling people?

1. Hook: Our Proudest Moment

Examples:
- "Last year, 87 young people who had never had access to a mentor graduated from our program"
- "Three years ago, this community had no safe place for teenagers to go after school. Today, 400 young people walk through our doors every week"
- "Maria came to us unable to read. Last month, she read her first book to her daughter"

2. Problem: What is happening that shouldn't be happening?

Examples:
- "Too many children in our community start school already behind their peers"
- "Small community organizations have great ideas but can't access the funding to make them happen"
- "Thousands of older people in our city live alone and can go days without speaking to another person"

3. Solution: What do we actually do?

Exercise #3: Our Story

4. Gap: What's still missing? Why do we need more people?

Examples:
- "The program works—but we currently have a waiting list of 200 students"
- "We know what works. What we don't have yet is the funding to bring it to every school"
- "We have volunteers ready to help, but we need more people to connect them with families who need support"

5. Call to Action: What's the one thing we want the reader to do?

Examples:
- "Sponsor one student"
- "Introduce us to a school that could benefit from the program"
- "Bring a friend to our next event"
- "Share Maria's story with someone who should hear it"
- "Volunteer for two hours this month"

One story = one primary CTA.

6. Photos: What 1–3 images make this story real?

7. Contact: Who can they talk to?

Can someone understand our story in 30 seconds?
□ Yes □ Not yet

Exercise #4: Our Impact

How do we demonstrate our impact?

Our Impact

1. A donation of $___ makes:

2. A donation of $___ makes:

3. One volunteer makes:

4. One supporter sharing our story makes:

5. Our 3 most powerful impact numbers are:

   ①
   ②
   ③

6. The human story behind one of these numbers:

7. The impact fact that surprises people most:

The final test:

Can someone explain our impact to a friend in one sentence?
"When you support us, you help

The message that donors will see after their contribution:

"Thanks to your support,

Exercise #5: Our Rhythm

How do we communicate consistently?

Stage	Channel	Date	Message
Pre-campaign: What does someone need to know or feel before we're ready to ask them to act?			
During: What can people see, do and share while it's happening?			
Post-campaign: What happened because people participated?			

Pre-campaign: Create anticipation

Examples:

- Why this matters
- The problem
- A human story
- A surprising fact
- Teaser
- What we're about to do
- "Get ready"

During: Invite participation

Examples:

- Launch
- Progress
- Stories
- Behind the scenes
- Milestones
- Urgency
- Social proof
- Specific CTA

Post-campaign: Close the loop

Examples:

- Results
- Thank you
- Impact
- Specific stories
- Photos
- What happens next
- Invitation to stay involved

Exercise #5: Our Rhythm

The 3 messages we must communicate:

1. The message people need to hear BEFORE:

2. The message people need to hear DURING:

3. The message people need to hear AFTER:

Where can our ambassadors amplify the rhythm?

Pre-campaign
During
Post-campaign

For example, an ambassador could:

- share the launch
- introduce someone
- bring a friend
- tell their personal story
- share a campaign milestone
- celebrate the results

Exercise #6: Our Ambassadors

Who helps us spread the word?

Instead of simply picking the biggest donors, choose the donors who will be able to advocate for you with excitement.

Create a list of the first 10 recurring donors and rate each donor from 1 to 5, where 1 represents a low score and 5 represents a high score in the given category.

	Care	Voice	Reach	Credibility
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Reach out personally and ask them to share your campaign.

Script:

Continue the list for as long as you can.

Authors

This guide has been brought to you by the ConnectionPoint team. **Reach out to us** if you have any questions or feedback!



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In Conclusion

Thank you for reading!

We hope this guide gives you what you've been looking for on your fundraising journey.

Please feel free to save it, share it with your colleagues and friends, print it out, or use it in any way you find helpful.

We're always open to your questions, suggestions, and ideas – and excited to see you succeed!



Resources

If you enjoyed this guide and want to dive deeper, explore our rich library of **free resources** to continue learning about digital fundraising.

FUNDRAISER HUB by connectionpoint

Toolkits, videos, articles with actionable guidelines to help you every step of the way:

https://connectionpoint.com/fundraiserhub/

connectionpoint Help Centre

Answers to technical questions, trouble-shooting, platform features:

https://connectionpoint.com/help/