



November 7, 2023



from the desk of  
**Kevin Smyrl** | Associate Partner

## It's Not About the Money

More and more often these days, I sit in my office and literally shake my head. Three weeks ago, unimaginable terror and atrocities began in Israel and Gaza. The US House of Representatives finally elected a Speaker after weeks of turmoil. A drawn-out war continues in Ukraine and Russia. As I sit here thinking about all that is going on, I'm very guarded about what I say and to whom I say it, both personally and professionally. As difficult as it is for one to think about what can be said, it's many times more difficult for leaders of organizations to decide what can be said on behalf of the organization and when.

As fundraisers and nonprofit leaders, it's easy to freeze and say nothing out of fear of losing donors or volunteers. Fear of damaging the organization's reputation. Or fear of getting fired because you shared your opinion. That's a fine strategy; you know your situation and constituents best. But let me offer a thought.

I know for certain that many people right now are worried, even scared about all that is going on, including myself. These are people we care about, our volunteers, our benefactors, our students and parishioners, the people we serve. We care about them not because of the money or time they donate but because they are compassionate people who want to make a difference in their community, their school or church, or the world. Many, if not most of us have donors, volunteers, and constituents who are directly affected by one or more of these events. Have you reached out individually or to a group to say, "I want to see how you are doing." Or, "I know this is a difficult time and I hope you are well?" This isn't about moving a donor closer to a gift; it's about caring for the people who care for us and our organizations.

Leaders can do the same within their organizations. I saw a note yesterday from a prominent non-profit leader sent to senior leaders in his organization. In the note he said in part, "As leaders, our top priority must be our community and the well-being of everyone we serve... and we encourage each of you to spend some time checking in with students, talking with your colleagues, and continuing to carry out your exemplary leadership during this important time."

Most of the worries, about saying the wrong thing at the wrong time, stem from fear of being portrayed as being on the "wrong side". It is possible, despite all the current narratives, to respect everyone's views and beliefs without taking sides.

# GIVING TUESDAY

## Are You Ready?

Unless you've been living at a research center at the South Pole or hibernating in an ashram in Bali for the last 21 years, we don't have to tell you how impactful [#GivingTuesday](#) is on nonprofit organizations all across the globe.

**This year's event is on November 28...just a few days away!**

We trust you are preparing. Make sure you pay attention to the article below, *9 Simple Ways to Raise Money Online*. Thirty-five million GivingTuesday donors in the US gave \$3.1 billion in 2022, a 15% dollar increase over 2021.

## 9 Simple Ways to Raise More Online

It's that time of the year, the busy year-end giving season! With nearly all nonprofits vying for donors through email, social media, texting, or a mix of communication channels, it's vital to create digital campaigns that grab attention and motivate giving, especially during the last few months of the year. As the busy "giving season" gets underway, The Chronicle of Philanthropy have top tips and insights, to help boost online results and reach year-end revenue goals.

### Find Social-Media Influencers in Your Network

Influencers are the lifeline of digital fundraising. Find influencers that are passionate about your organization and can share a compelling message about the importance of the work that is being done and that has been done. An influencer could include existing donors, volunteers, or others who are close to your nonprofit.

### Foster Competition

In higher ed for example, create a "digital reunion," to challenge graduated classes to compete to make the most gifts and involved the participation of ambassadors from each class. Those mechanisms help foster healthy competition.

### Lean on Your Volunteers

Identify those who are comfortable with digital tools and think about how to best put their skills to work. For example, one volunteer might be able to help create videos or graphics, while another might be better suited to help with thank-you phone calls.

### Don't Forget About Your Board

Get trustees and other key volunteers to help with fundraising, such as by asking them to make a gift early in the campaign, so you can highlight those contributions to help build

momentum.

### Thank and Follow Up With Donors

The big picture is not only to secure donors, but to also retain them. Create a stewardship plan, that should include more than just an automated email acknowledgement of online gifts. Send a thank-you letter, add donors to your email list, and show appreciation through social media, direct mail, and email outreach after the campaign ends, she suggests.

### Create Compelling Videos

Make videos that resonate, focus not on what your nonprofit does but why, and then show the happy ending or positive results your work brought about. Use Your Phone. Useful videos don't always need to be highly produced.

### Stay Front and Center

Send newsletters. Be active on Social Media. Create digital campaigns throughout the year, all leading up to Giving Tuesday. The key is to make sure you're not just always asking for money.

### Start Small

If you're a small nonprofit or new to online fundraising, you should start small so you can build muscle. Start with a two-week campaign to try to raise a certain amount and see what happens and which messages work.

### Be Flexible

When planning a campaign, carefully consider your staff's bandwidth to do the work, and be willing to push back the timeline if needed.

[More here.](#) COP, 10/16

---

Our LinkedIn

---

## Grant Seekers May Benefit as Wealthy People Put More Money Into Their Foundations

Foundation giving is likely to rise by 2% this year, to \$95 billion, according to a new estimate by **FoundationMark**. Foundation endowment values dropped nearly 4% in the last quarter due to the slippage of stock and bond markets. While that hurt, overall asset gains for endowments were about 5% for the year – and that means foundations are unlikely to cut back total giving in 2023. Bright side: a surge in giving to foundations that will help make up for some of the challenges caused in the markets.

Donors poured \$92 billion into foundations in 2021 and \$67 billion in 2020. That's much higher than in the previous eight years, when contributions ranged from \$40 billion to \$60 billion a year. That has a powerful impact on giving: Most foundations set their giving rates based on the value of their assets over the previous three years.

### Key Findings

- Major U.S. and international stock indices declined by an estimated 3% to 4% during the last quarter. Meanwhile bonds remained flat.
- For foundation assets, that meant that a substantial chunk of the 4.6% gain in the second quarter was erased.
- As donors poured more money into their foundations in 2020 and 2021 – increasing their donations by many billions over previous years – total foundation assets have swelled from \$1.25 trillion to \$1.32 trillion.

- Foundations typically base their giving on the average total of their assets over the previous three years, so the combination of new money pouring in, and investment gains bodes well for grant making. Foundations are required by law to distribute at least 5% of their net assets, on average, every year.

[More here.](#) COP, 10/23

[Our LinkedIn](#)

## Welcome Returning Client Partner



### We Know Social Service Organizations

For more than 35 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with some of the largest, and some of the smallest, organizations across the country that help communities be a better place to live.

[Our Client Partners](#)

### A Fresh Approach to Fundraising

Our services aren't cookie cutter. We don't operate with a boilerplate, merely changing names and locations. We craft each and every service we provide to match your organization's unique needs, wants and abilities. We work hard and expect you to do the same. Together we can help you transform your institution, your fundraising, and the community you serve.

Whether your need is in Capital Campaign, Annual Fund Campaign, Major Gifts, Leadership Annual Giving, Planned Giving or all of the above, we take a fresh approach to nonprofit fundraising.



# Alexander·Haas

TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

[www.fundraisingcounsel.com](http://www.fundraisingcounsel.com)  
[info@alexanderhaas.com](mailto:info@alexanderhaas.com)

Piedmont Place | 3520 Piedmont Place NE, Suite 450 |  
Atlanta GA 30305-1512 | 404.525.7575