

18.9: Case study - GlobalGiving

One-line summary

GlobalGiving website increased engagement by 10× using personalised email.

The challenge

GlobalGiving is a charity crowdfunding website that provides social entrepreneurs and non-profits the chance to raise money for community causes worldwide.

GlobalGiving sends more than 3.5 million emails per year, but they were getting decreasing marginal returns from each send, finding it more and more difficult to catch the attention of donors due to email fatigue. (Source: Marketing Sherpa, 2016)

The solution

The brand decided to personalise and customise content and make sure it was getting to the right people.

They worked with an ESP to make sure their emails were certified and created an entirely opt-in email list. Using tracking, they identified a handful of domains and sub-segments of donors that were reporting abnormally high spam rates, which they decided was due to regional differences - their campaigns worked well in the United States, but not in each of the 180 countries to which they send emails. For example, non-English-speaking countries reported higher spam rates. They suppressed these domains from their list and automatically unsubscribed anyone who reported an email as spam.

Next, they created a personalised recommendation email using a recommendation engine similar to Netflix, but which looks at users' past giving habits rather than their watching habits, and used that along with a matching offer and a time-bound appeal for users to donate by a certain deadline.

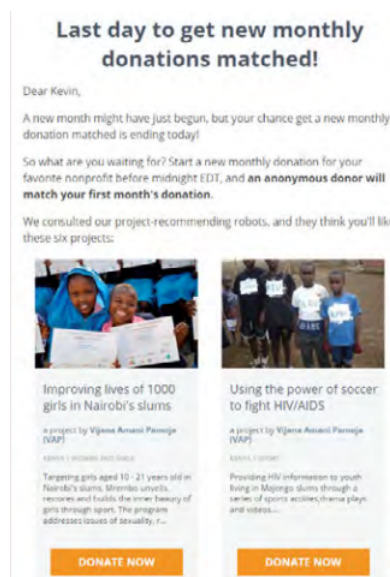


Figure 18.9.1: GlobalGiving personalised email *Adapted From Marketing Sherpa, 2016*

They followed this with constant A/B split testing to ensure that their recommendation engine was working. They also tested subject lines, content, appeals, and more.

The results

The team saw a tenfold increase in engagement from email.

- Their recommendation emails dramatically outperformed the emails that sent random projects to donors.
- When factoring in the donor's giving history, using projects they had supported in the past, they saw a 20% boost in engagement as well.

They also created an email program that is carefully set up to improve the brand's reputation in the long term.

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