Nathan (00:00:00):

We use data and testing and research and optimization to really prove what works to grow, giving that's really what we're going to talk all about today, specifically in the context of email appeals, how do we use what we've learned from data and testing to write a more effective email appeal, to help, help raise more money for you for your cause for your organization this year ends. So you can make an even greater impact going in to 2022. So again, thank you so much for being here grateful for all of you. And hopefully we can make the most of every moment of your time today. I'm going to keep the chat up throughout today. So if you've got comments throughout, feel free to drop them in there, I'll try to keep an eye over there. But if you quick things before we really get going into the nine steps to an email appeal, number one, the most popular question we ever receive about anything is, is there going to be recording?

Nathan (00:00:51):

Because lots of times you want to watch it back. You want to share it with somebody, things like that. And the answer is always, yes, we are recording this webinar today. So later today, we will send you an email around about 5:00 PM central time. This evening, we'll send you an email with a link to a recap page that has the video. We'll also share a link to slides. We'll try to get this transcribed. If you want to read a transcript or share that as well as any featured resources we've mentioned throughout the webinar today, we'll share those links with you later on as well. And we should have time should have time for some Q and a at the end. So if you have questions throughout the presentation today, jump into the Q and a tool in your zoom toolbar. There's a chat tool, and then there's a Q and a tool.

Nathan (00:01:33):

So use the Q and a tool. If you have a question that you'd like me to answer later on, drop your questions in there, we'll check those out after the presentation and try to get you answers if we can. There's a lot of things that we know work through testing and optimization. There's also a lot of things that we haven't proven yet that we don't know. So we'll try to get you the best answer we possibly can. If you if you and I haven't met yet, we haven't connected outside of just, just now. My name's Nathan Hill, I'm the VP of marketing here at NextAfter. It is my privilege and my joy to really work, to kind of fuel our mission, which is to equip as many nonprofits and fundraisers like, like you, as we possibly can with what we're learning works, to grow giving integral generosity.

Nathan (00:02:16):

So what I want to do, hi, Linda, I see in the chat welcome. Glad you're here. What I want to do is start with kind of a quick story. Cause I had this sort of email appeal template put together. I had some different slides of thinking about how do we talk about this in the best way, the most effective way. And then I got an email in my, in my inbox that I was a bit confused by. And then as I delve into it, I started asking myself some critical or hard questions about like, why, why do, why am I confused by this email? What's tripping me up about it. I went through it and I thought it might be helpful for us to look at it together as sort of a baseline for what's pretty common. And what's typical in nonprofit marketing and nonprofit fundraising.

Nathan (00:02:57):

We'll look at that before we move into maybe a clearer framework as to how to present our appeal. So here's a quick story, a quick example. So I received this email in my inbox and I've anonymized the organization. If you're from this organization, maybe you've sent this email I'm sorry, you could let me

know. Maybe we'll make a donation or something to make it up to you, but I'm not going to try to rag on your organization. I've anonymized you as best as I can. But let's take a look at this email here. Here's what I got in my inbox last week. So this is on November 9th. You can see the timestamp on there November 9th, Tuesday, November 9th at 8:48 AM. So first thing in the morning, it says, add us to your giving equation. This giving Tuesday it's sent from the name of the organization that you can see the preview text there.

Nathan (00:03:40):

And I had several questions come up in my brain, as I was reading through even just this what we call the email envelope, which is these three factors, the subject line, the sender name and the preview text. These are the three factors that you can control as the first impression you make on a recipient in the inbox. We call it the email envelope and I had some questions come up. As I, as I looked at this and here's what they are. At least some of them, number one, add us to your giving equation. And my thought was, well, what, what is, what's my giving equation? This is pretty common. You know, maybe like brand type of language or marketing type of language. I'm sure that someone, or someone's sat down and thought about how do we make some sort of like catchy language.

Nathan (00:04:23):

That's going to really connect with someone as to your giving equation. But I read this and I, I don't know what my giving equation is. I do. I have lunch. Am I supposed to have one? I'm not quite, I'm not quite sure. So I'm, I'm initially confused by that and that's not necessarily bad, but it's a point of a point of confusion. And then it's my giving equation, this giving Tuesday, which then makes me think, well, giving Tuesday is actually a little bit of waste. Isn't there like over three weeks away still it's November, no, November 9th right now, but giving Tuesday is not till like the very end of the month. And I'm still confused that giving Tuesday is actually on like November 30th and not in December this year, which is weirding me out regardless. But I was a bit confused by giving the equation.

Nathan (00:05:00):

Not sure what that is. Isn't giving Tuesday a little bit away. Why am I getting ready for it now? And then moving through you, you're telling me to add you to, by giving equation. And you know, my gut reaction to this is this sounds like something you want me to do, but I'm not sure what, why is this relevant to me? What? What's, what's the hook for me? What's the reason for me. So if you're, you're asking me to do something for you, like maybe get pleased would be nice. You're just like coming right out in the inbox, telling me to do something, but I don't have any context or any reasons why what's my motivation here. What's the stake I have here and moving down. So I've read the subject line. And then I look at the sender names, how it's being presented in my inbox.

Nathan (00:05:40):

And the sender name is the name of the organization. Again, I'm not going to tell you the organization just to preserve the anonymity here, but it's sent from basically the brand names, not from a human being, which causes me to ask some for the questions is that, is this some form of marketing. If I get an email from a brand entity, not from a human being, I assume that it's some form of marketing, meaning you want me to do something for you. You're trying to get me to take some sort of action that benefits you. Is this something that I should care about? Why should I care about this as, as clearly something for you? And then to further validate my assumptions I'm making as I'm moving through the email

envelope. Well, then I look at the preview text and the very first thing I see in the preview text says view this email in your browser.

Nathan (00:06:25):

And my first instinct here is, oh, I get it. It's a newsletter. Most newsletters that you receive are in some sort of, you know, nicely designed HTML email type of wrapper. And in case it doesn't display properly. You've got the little link at the top that says view in browser, you click that, you go view it in your web browser. Great. So you're telling me and indicating to me again that this is some form of marketing, probably just the, just the digest or a newsletter that is fairly passive. Maybe am I interested in it? I'm not quite sure it doesn't seem like it's super important to me today. Now, moving through this, then I see some more of the preview texts. They've clearly customized it here. It says this giving Tuesday, add our organization to your giving equation. So they're reinforcing the subject line, but I still have the same level of confusion.

Nathan (00:07:11):

There's no additional context here about what my giving equation is, but I'm assuming you're wanting me to give to you at this point. And then you get to the actual start of the email where it says, hi, Nathan, hi, first name and reiterate. We're only three weeks away from giving Tuesday, which again, prompts the same type of question. Like I'm not, I'm not really thinking about giving Tuesday yet, at least in terms of like how I might give. I don't really know if I am going to give yet let alone who I'm going to give to how much I'm going to give, why I might give you want me to plan this three weeks out for me that feels maybe a little bit excessive. Maybe they've seen some better results doing this, but for me, at least this doesn't feel quite like a relevant connection.

Nathan (00:07:51):

Why are you talking to me about giving Tuesday so far out in advance? So these are all the questions that come up in my brain. As I read just the email envelope. I haven't even gotten into the email yet. And my question for you at this point, before we look at the actual email itself, what do you think that the call to action of this email is going to be feel free to jump in the chat and tell me what you think. What do you think they're going to actually ask you to do? Once you open the email, I'll give you a moment. Jump in the chat. Let me know what you think. Marianne right off the top says to donate, donate, donate, donate, donate, donate, donate, donate, donate, donate, donate, asking you to give to them on giving Tuesday. So yes, donate, donate, donate, mark your calendar to give that day, essentially, we're all kind of saying the same sort of thing.

Nathan (00:08:36):

Sarah says, wait, three weeks. Then give essentially all of these wrap around this idea of, you know, giving to them, whether I'm giving now or I'm giving later, they want me to give to them. That's what I assumed also, but let's open up the email. Here's what it says. We'll read all the copy. Cause again, I don't want to quite clearly give away who this is. But it says this giving Tuesday, add us to your giving equation. We're only three weeks away from giving Tuesday. And then we moved down the email, you know, working with us can make a difference, explore thousands of nonprofits and find trustworthy organizations to support learn more. And so at this point I'm skimming the email. I haven't really read the copy cause I already have an assumption of what you're asking me to do. And I get to this call to action and realize, oh, you're not actually asking me to give this.

Nathan (00:09:23):

Isn't a donation appeal, which causes me to reframe everything that I've just read and actually use. Now scroll back to the top. And now I need to read through the nuances of the copy and the detail to try and reframe it in my mind and understand what they're actually asking me to do, which is they use some content tools that they have to plan my giving Tuesday. And then I get to this point, I'm like, okay, I think I get what you're actually asking me to do finally, which is to give, so there's now there's two different calls to action and it's finally, it's finally here. So now with two different calls to actions, I've been confused. I've reframed my mindset. And now you're asking me to do two different things and now I'm going to opt out because I don't really know what's valuable or what's important.

Nathan (00:10:05):

So the reason I share all this with you is not just to rag on some sort of email because that's actually a really common type of email that you probably have one of those in your inbox right now from maybe another organization, but in a very similar framework. What I want to do is get you to think about that for a moment and realize all the little different micro decisions and assumptions that are happening in someone's brain as they are opening your emails this season. And considering should they give to you as you're trying to make an appeal, is there clarity about what you're actually asking someone to do? Is there an abundance of reasons as to why someone should keep reading or actually open the email or considered giving? And so what I want to do for the rest of our time is give you a clear framework based on data, based on testing and based on real results so that we don't create confusion in the inbox using common type of marketing language.

Nathan (00:10:58):

That's probably our more natural bent, but actually using data using testing, using this framework to become more human in the inbox, to communicate a clear appeal as to why someone should give. And that that's really actually hard to do. It's way easier, said than done to become human in the inbox and build a real relationship. But that's hopefully where we're going. As we walk through this framework today. Now I don't want you to just blindly trust me because this isn't just a bunch of other best practices. You could go find a bunch of different best practices on how to write emails, kind of anywhere on the internet. But, but what we get to bring to the table here at NextAfter is, is data and research about what actually works to grow up giving. So next after we're three things, we're a research lab or a digital first agency and a training Institute.

Nathan (00:11:45):

And on the research lab side of things, we're able to conduct a lot of different AB tests and experiments to really prove what works to increase and to grow giving. So we're going out and we're conducting research to figure out what are the tactics that organizations are using. And then we're bringing them in-house inside of our consultancy and agency to put them to the test and prove what works and what doesn't today we've recorded almost 3,200 online fundraising experiments with a variety of different nonprofits from different verticals, different sizes. And we worked with about 40 different organizations to conduct this type of AB testing, but even beyond just testing, actually implementing digital fundraising strategies in order to grow, giving so much that there's an organization we've worked with for a number of years that, you know, back in 2015 was that 800,000 in online revenue.

Nathan (00:12:31):

And in 2020 hit 9.5 million. So the strategies that we're able to put the work using data, using testing as the foundation are able to lead to greater giving. So I don't want you to just blindly trust me, but I want you to trust what the data says works to grow giving. So without further ado, let's jump into this email appeal template. And I want to sort of couch this in this, this, this idea that there is not a single correct way to write an email appeal. So what I'm going to show you, it's not like the perfect ultimate formula to write the most effective email appeal that's ever existed is going to raise more money than anything ever has. The goal is to give you a repeatable framework that you can use on those days where, you know, maybe you've just got writer's block and you're not quite sure what to do.

Nathan ([00:13:18](#)):

It's going to be a tool that you can use to sort of balance your copy off of and make sure do I have all the core components. Maybe they're not in this exact order that we're going to walk through, but do you have the core components to make a compelling argument as to why someone should give, again, this isn't the ultimate email template, but is a better starting place for you because it's based on data and research, not just gut feelings, intuition, and best practice. So here we go. Number one, the very first thing that you need to do is make sure to send your email from a human being, from a real person, from a believable person at your organization, I would encourage you not to send from the name of your organization or the brand entity, but send it from a human being.

Nathan ([00:14:02](#)):

We often say that people give to people, not to faceless organizations, people don't give to email marketing machines. They give to people that they have real relationships with. I think if you, if you do any work in major giving or you have a major, major gift officer, major gift team, they're building these types of relations in a one-to-one capacity, every single day, our goal, you know, reaching out to larger groups of donors via email is to take that same type of approach, but to do so at a mass scale, building a relationship with a human being in the inbox. And no, I'm not just making this up. There's actually real data and real testing to support this type of an idea. We should be communicating like real people. Here's an experiment to illustrate in version a, this email is being sent from the name of the organization.

Nathan ([00:14:51](#)):

You can see that clearly on your screen, you've got a subject line. It says, compassion, go travel the U S and make, and then it goes on from there, you've got a little preview window and all that kind of sounds like it's it's new brand language sent from an organization, sent from a brand. The version B is, is holistically different. It's sent from a different it's sent from an actual person. It's not the brand name anymore, but the key difference here, isn't just in the sender name. It's actually in the holistic approach of writing an email that both sounds like it's written from a person and looks like it's written from a person. So now it's sent from a person named Audrey Audrey, which all the subject line says, quick question. And the previous text you can see into the copy starts to look and sound like a human conversation where version ACEs stressed out from the endless search for a job that best utilizes your passions.

Nathan ([00:15:41](#)):

That sounds like an ad version visas. Hi, John, how would you feel about an opportunity with an amazing non-profit? It sounds a little bit more warm and personal in tone because holistically it's human communication, as opposed to, you know, branding and marketing, and this led to a 330% increase in

opens because that people, when they open the inbox, when you open your inbox, you're largely looking to have conversations, the communication with an actual person on the other end, not to be marketed to. We want to talk with real people. That's one example. This one, I think is interesting where both senders are actually human beings. So it's not a brand versus a person now it's person versus person to try to see who's the right center. Maybe who's the most believable center in version a it's sent from the president of this organization in version B, it's sent from a vice-president of a specific aspect of the organization, a spiff, a specific set of services that this organization offers and what they found by sending from a slightly lower level person.

Nathan ([00:16:41](#)):

Who's maybe a bit more attached to a certain set of programming was that it led to 150% increase in donations. The copy in both versions is exactly the same, but the difference is that Joanne was the more believable sender in this case, a bit more believable that someone like Joanne could be sending out ongoing, consistent communication to all of their donors. That's more believable than maybe the CEO sitting down and writing a bunch of emails to their entire email list. And Joanne is probably a little bit more attached to some of the specific stories in the specific program. So maybe she's, she's the best person to write this type of an email as opposed to the president or the CEO. So consider not just sending from a person, but also figuring out who's the right person to send from.

Nathan ([00:17:30](#)):

Pardon me, if you will, I've had a bit of a sniffle, a bit of a cold, so I'm trying to fight through that as we're going through today. But let's, let's keep rolling here. So that's number one, send from a human being, send from a real person. Number two, the subject line. What do we do about the subject line? And the golden line is to just get someone to open. Now we want to get the right amount of opens. We want to get the right kind of opens. There's lots of things you could do in the subject line to sort of game it, to try to increase opens, but it doesn't actually lead to more donations and put the primary purpose of the subject going is to win the open. We're not trying to convert someone into a donor right here, just the subject line.

Nathan ([00:18:10](#)):

There's not enough room. There's not enough context to explain your value proposition more on that in a little bit. But the goal here is to get someone to open. And there's really two things that I would encourage you to do with this email. There's a bunch of things you could do, but there's two things I want you to focus on. One is to help someone feel that there's value in opening the email. I can get something of meaning and value. If I open this email and then number two, leave just enough info out of the subject line, in order to spark a certain level of curiosity, invoke this idea of mystery, where I have to open it to find out more I'm interested, but I got to find out what this is really all about. Let's look at a couple of experiments. Number one, around adding value.

Nathan ([00:18:54](#)):

This is not a donation focused email, but it really shows the impact of conveying value in the subject line version a and version B are both being sent from the same person, a human being. The copy is the same. The ultimate call to action is the same, but the subject line is different version ACEs stay informed about your breast health. This is from national breast cancer foundation. Version B says a new early detection guide, which one of these sounds like it's going to convey more value, which has something that you can actually act on and get meaningful value from Virgin eight. To me sounds a bit more passive. Like it's

passive information. Maybe it's a newsletter or something that I can continue to get getting some updates in my inbox about my breast health. And that's interesting and have some value, but it's fairly passive.

Nathan ([00:19:42](#)):

But version B it's clear that inside of here is something that I can use a new early detection guide. If I'm the ideal recipient of this email, this is something valuable to me. I know that if I open this, I'm going to get something valuable, a tool that I can use today. And what they saw was this led to almost a 16% increase in email, open by conveying more value in the subject line. Now you can convey value in your subject line. Even when you're asking for a donation, you can frame it as an opportunity, you know, to be a part of a unique, a chance to give or to support a unique cause. So there's different language we can use to frame it as, as being valuable. Even if you are asking for a gift and then we can also add mystery version a and this case has studied the gospel of John with DTS version.

Nathan ([00:20:31](#)):

BESE has a special gift from Dallas theological seminary version a tells you exactly. What's in the email. The call to action is in the subject line. You receive this, you see it in your inbox and you immediately are forced to make a decision. Do I want to study the gospel of John with DTS? Or do I not? It's basically a yes or no question. Virgin B is a little different where the ultimate call to action in the email is exactly the same, but it's more mysterious. They left enough info out of the subject line to cause you to say, oh, what is the special gift? That sounds like something I'm interested in. I don't know what it is yet I should open to find out. And what this allows them to do is have the whole length of the email in order to win someone over and to have the amount of room to convey the context and the value proposition about why should you study the gospel of John with DTS version a you never get that chance.

Nathan ([00:21:24](#)):

All you get is the subject line. And for them to say yes or no, Virgin V gives you more opportunity to convey your value proposition because it led to a 37% increase in email opens, but consider both how do we add value? How do we leave enough out to add some mystery sparked curiosity in order to generate more open? So you have a better chance of conveying why someone should actually give to you at such a critical time in such a critical season. Now, if you want to dive deeper on subject lines, it's a whole lot more that we could talk about. I do have this worksheet for you. You can grab this, we can share the link out for it to you can grab that URL right on your screen. You can even put your phone. I'll give you a second to do this.

Nathan ([00:22:04](#)):

Open up your camera pointed at the QR code and head to the landing page. You can grab this little worksheet. That's going to walk you through five different steps to adding these five mental levers into your subject lines, to increase value, add some mystery, add recency, make it feel personal, and then make sure it's authentic. You can even see on the side, there's some different like cue words to kind of get your brain rolling with some different ideas as to how to craft a more effective subject line. Even if you don't consider yourself to be an expert copywriter, this can be an effective tool for you. So that's all I'll say about subject lines. A lot more. We could dive into there. Let's move on to number three, which is the preview text, the third element and final element of the email envelope. What do we do with it?

Nathan ([00:22:51](#)):

And what is it? So we'll look at what it is first. It's this little preview into what the copy of the email is about. Now. Generally the preview text just brings in the first line of copy. So if I send you a personal email or you send me a personal email, you open Gmail or outlook or whatever tool you use, you write an email to me or to a friend or to a colleague. You send it on the other side, they're going to see the first line or two of copy that you have written in your email. And that's it yet as marketers. What we ended up doing with the preview text oftentimes is I guess one of two things, one, it sucks in all the HTML that's right at the top of the screen. And then it just looks like jumbled garbage right there in the preview text, or says something like view in browser, which gives me no real meaningful context as to what the email is about.

Nathan (00:23:40):

Or sometimes we customize it using, like putting our marketing caps on and being these like really clever marketers. And we customize it in hopes of winning someone over in the inbox. But I'm going to encourage you to, again, just act like a human in the inbox. We want to mimic the same behaviors of people in the inbox, because we're trying to be a person in the inbox. That's building a relationship. So don't customize it. Let it pull in the first line of copy of your email. What does it look like? And why is it important? Well, we we've put this to the test, even in our own marketing. And we, we, we like to think we're pretty clever marketers because we're testing all the time and trying to figure out what works. And we thought, well, this preview text of this digest email, this newsletter email is fine.

Nathan (00:24:26):

It says happy Friday, hope you had a good week. Wanted to share a few of our latest posts with you. And that looks like the copy. That's in the email. It's exactly what it says in the email, but what if we customized it? And we told people what value they're going to get out of this email? Here's the content, the core content that's in it. And here's the things that you can learn from this newsletter update email. Again, we thought we were pretty clever thought this could work ran the test. Womp womp 9% decrease in email opens because we clearly communicated that we're just a bunch of marketers trying to get you to do something. Clearly. We're not trying to build a relationship in the inbox. We're just trying to get you to take an action so we can see the, our web traffic jump up.

Nathan (00:25:04):

That's the assumption, at least like the cynical assumption that I make as a marketer. But that's what the data says. People are less inclined to open an email that appears to be marketing. So don't customize your preview text. Let it pull in the copy from your email, the first line or two. Now, if naturally it's going to pull in some HTML junk, then you should customize it, but customize it. So it looks like the first line or two of actual copy and text in your email and that's the email envelope. So again, that's like the first impression that you get to make on someone in the inbox, but let's start to jump into the actual copy of your appeal. And the very first thing we want to do is not just jump right in through all the reasons why someone should give. We don't want to get up on our soap box and start telling people all the reasons that they should give and all the impact they can make and all this stuff.

Nathan (00:25:54):

That's not how people communicate. That's not how quality conversations are formed. Most quality conversations start by saying hello. And they start by saying hi. And they start by calling someone by their name. And so we want to do that in our own emails as well. So we want to say, hello, call your donor by their name. You should have their name. When they've signed up to receive emails, hopefully

you're capturing what their name is. If not, you should start and I'll show you why here in a moment, but call them by name, start with a warm greeting because your goal again is to have a conversation. You're not trying to force somebody to give. I'm trying to build a relationship and have a meaningful conversation with them. So here's some ideas of what this might look like. Version a and version B of this email save the same exact thing.

Nathan ([00:26:42](#)):

The links go to same place. As the call to actions are exactly the same they're sent from the same person. They have the same everything except for one thing. And do you see it on your screen? You see the difference. Shout out on the chat. If you see what's the difference between these two emails, salutation, Jay Wright says aim. I think you met name. Yes. I see it. Hi Jeff. Hi Jeff greeting name. It's right there. It's two words. Would you like to see the power of these two words of hello, first name? This is the power of calling someone by their name a 270% increase in clicks, 270% more people clicking through to actually go to the landing page where they can read more about why they might give, and probably you have that many more people that are just willing to give you the time of day to even consider your appeal here in the inbox.

Nathan ([00:27:33](#)):

If you called them by name, if you just jumped straight in, well, let's read out loud what it sounds like you just opened an email and it says at the beginning of October, our goal is to reach as many women as possible with our new ebook version B. You open your email. It says, hi. Hi Carrie. Hi Allie. Hi Kimberly. Hi, Andy. That feels a lot different to then say hello, and then move into. At the beginning of October, we had this goal to reach as many women as possible with our new ebook. The tone is fundamentally different because you've said hello. And it leads to this increase in clicks. So call your donor by name, say hello. That's so simple. It's also so easy to miss. If your email tool doesn't allow you to insert the first name, I would focus on getting a new email tool.

Nathan ([00:28:16](#)):

There are a lot of good ones out there that are fairly cheap, or even start for free that will allow you to insert the first name. Maybe that's not your December priority. Maybe that's your January 20, 22 priority, but considered getting a tool to allow yourself to insert the first name, call someone by their name. If you don't have the capability yet. Here's another interesting example, going beyond just calling someone by their name and saying, hello. They both do that. They both say hi friend or hi first name, but the control, the original version jumped straight in to a bit more like branding type of language. And it's not bad per se, but we'll look at the contrast version. Aces. If I had to describe the purpose of Dallas theological seminary, in one phrase, it would be this teach truth and love. Well, you can pretty much assume that that's probably a tagline and that's probably some sort of branding language jumps.

Nathan ([00:29:09](#)):

It just jumps right in. And again, that's not like terrible. It's not bad. And we only kind of see the difference when we put it to the test against something else and they tested a different tone or the same core value proposition is there, but it explained differently in more of a human tone, a warm, personal tone. Here's how version B starts. Hi friend, my office affords me a fantastic view of the DTS campus, where I can see students engaged in study theological conversations and walking sometimes quickly to from class each year and feel the difference in the tone. Reversion agents jumped straight in and version B is, this is a human conversation. It's a conversation that might just come up organically. If

you were talking to mark in person, he might say, you know what? Every day, you know, I be because where my office is, I get to see where students are coming in.

Nathan (00:30:00):

It's just an organic way to start a conversation. The tone is fundamentally different and it led to this huge increase, 277% increase in people clicking to then go to the page to consider giving. So don't just say hello, but say hello, greet them, begin a conversation in a warm and meaningful way. You can feel that all these things are really coming back to how do you build a relationship in the inbox? We're not trying to just be clever marketers. We're trying to be humans in the inbox and have human conversations with real people. So say, hello, call your donor by name. Now let's move into really the meat of the of the email of the email appeal and of the copy. And I'm going to show you the next three steps, and then we're going to kind of zoom out for a moment, but the next three steps go like this.

Nathan (00:30:47):

You're going to want to start to explain the problem at hand, which is the ultimate reason that someone would give. And really the ultimate reason that you as an organization exist, what's the problem you're trying to solve. What's the ultimate solution. It might be something very big and macro level. Maybe it's, maybe it's very small, but it might be something big, propose a solution. And then we aim to help the donors see their place in it and their role in it. How can they make an impact on it? Articulate clearly the impact they can make it. We'll spend some more time on each one of those, but I want to just show you that these three elements together, five, six, and seven, the problem, the solution and the impact. This is really like the core of what we call the value proposition. If you've been on some other next after training, you might be really familiar with the value proposition, but if you're just coming in new and haven't been on previous webinars about this topic, there's a lot of different assumptions and ideas that probably go through your head.

Nathan (00:31:39):

When you hear the term value proposition, you might think of something like a mission statement. You might think of like the brand language that maybe you have printed out on a card at your desk or something like that. We'd like to think about the value proposition as the answer to this one fundamental question. And it's a question that every single potential donor is asking, whether it's conscious or subconsciously, they're asking this question, which is this, why should I, your ideal donor give to you rather than to some other organization or even at all? Because remember, I don't have to give, I can't force anybody to give. I don't have to give you a gift. Why should I give to you rather than some other organization or even at all? And there's a lot we could look at related to how you can craft an effective value proposition.

Nathan (00:32:29):

We're not going to dive into a bunch of experiments on this today, cause we've got some other training around that, but I want to give you four things to consider. As you craft these different elements of your email appeal, how do you accurately and effectively, excuse me, answer this core question. Number one, we need to address the appeal. How badly do I, the ideal donor want to support the thing that you're talking about? How badly do I want to give, to make an impact on the cause that you're articulating? Do I share the same values of, of that? Cause do I think it's as important as you do? How badly do I want it? And just a quick score here. You can basically look at your, you're looking at your value proposition. Look at your copy and say, is your ideal donor have no interest in this at all?

Nathan (00:33:12):

Or is it really high? It's like a three high interest. You may actually have to hand your email to someone else and have them do the scoring for you. Sometimes we can get in their own heads here. We need some outside perspective, but that's number one. How badly do I, your ideal donor want to give to support this cause that you're articulating number two. Can I, your ideal donor make this impact at some other organization or maybe with any other organization? Can I make this impact literally anywhere? Can I give hope literally anywhere else? Or can I only make this impact with this type of unique approach through you? Donors are going to compare you to other organizations, both similar organizations, as well as others that they care about. Even if they're in a different sector. If I have a limited capacity to give as basically every donor does, to a certain extent, private limited, limited capacity to give, I'm trying to figure out where can I give to make a meaningful impact on a cause I care about, I might care about three or four different causes, so why should I entrust you with my money rather than this organization over here, we have to articulate that in our copy.

Nathan (00:34:16):

Number three is clarity. How quickly, how easily do I understand what you're communicating? What you're articulating as I read through your copy, does it take me a little bit to think like, okay, I kind of get it. I think I get what they're talking about or is it an instant understanding? Like, yes, I want this badly. I want to make this type of impact. And I clearly understand where my gift is going to go. I want to make sure it's are articulated very clearly the impact someone can make. And then fourth credibility. You can do all the right things and have a clear value proposition that's meaningful and powerful and impactful and unique and exclusive. But are you saying things that are kind of hard to believe is the impact? You're articulating hard to believe that my $50 donation can do that. You might need some other testimonials and maybe some other data in evidentials to back up your claims so that someone can really believe what you are communicating again.

Nathan (00:35:10):

So much more that we could talk about related to the value proposition, but I want you to keep those things in mind as we look at five, six and seven here. So again, backing up number five, we need to explain the problem. You've greeted someone warmly. You're starting this conversation and now you need to articulate, why am I emailing you in the first place? What's the reason for the email. And the reason really is because there's a problem. You and I have a similar value set. If I'm your ideal donor, you and I share similar values and we see similar problems in the world that we want to see change. Whether that's something as huge and big as like trying to solve, say, you know, climate change or, or ending world hunger, these big macro huge problems that our organizations exist for, or maybe it's on a smaller, more local scale.

Nathan (00:35:55):

Maybe we're trying to feed the hungry and serve the needy in our town or in our city or trying to serve the homeless in our city or in our region. We all have these been problems we exist for. We need to explain what the problem is, because if there is no problem to solve, then there is no reason to give. So that's where we've got to start is articulating what in the world is wrong and why is there actually a need in the first place? This probably isn't one sentence. This probably isn't even two sentences. It might be a couple of paragraphs that you need to write to articulate. What's the scope of the problem at hand. And then we're going to move into proposing a solution. Now this could be casting a really big vision for a big

macro level solution. Something like, again, trying to impact the environment and solve climate change as it is a big giant problem that probably takes a big giant solution.

Nathan (00:36:48):

And you may need to cast the vision for what that is, or you might have a more localized problem you're trying to solve where the solution may be is a little less complex. And maybe, maybe it's maybe it's simple. So this might take you a couple of paragraphs. It might take you a sentence, but we need to articulate what's the solution to this problem. And then moving from there, we need to help the donor to see what's their role to play. Their role probably is not to go end world hunger today. Their role is to donate. And what type of impact does that actually have? So we then can spend really the bulk of our email talking about the impact and showcasing to the donor of the impact that they can have when they give in order to affect the solution in order to solve the problem.

Nathan (00:37:33):

So we want to explain in tangible detail how a donation is going to be used. Who is it going to help? Who's going to go to what kinds of services will it provide? How quickly can the donation actually be put to use? Is it going to be put to use today is going to be put to use next month. You may even start to add in some layers of credibility here by inserting a testimonial from maybe it's a donor, who's seen the impact. Maybe it's someone who's actually been a recipient of the care of your organization who can talk about here's the impact is actually made in my life. How can we start to articulate in a tangible way the impact of donor can have, so that's really five, six and seven together as this value proposition idea, a couple of quick experiments around the value proposition, just to show you the power that it has.

Nathan (00:38:18):

This is actually on the homepage of an organization a couple of years ago where version a doesn't have a lot of value proposition copy. It says this Christmas change a life shop. Now, now, without any other context here, this might actually be a bit confusing, but I would imagine you've probably run some sort of campaign that looks maybe, maybe similar to this, where you put some effort into like the design and the branding and the packaging of it. And then lean on that as the core reason to give this Christmas change a life. It's a nice little branding language. It looks really nice when the screen shop. Now, personally, I read this and I'm not quite sure exactly what the connection is to Christmas and changing a life and shopping, but in version B, they kind of realized that and put this idea to the test of what, if we clearly articulated the value proposition, instead of just relying on the marketing branding.

Nathan (00:39:11):

What if we took that language expanded upon it and clearly showed people the impact they can have. And now it says you can change a life with a gift. This Christmas, give a gift that can meet a critical need of a child or family living in poverty. When a family receives a goat education, water, or some other tangible solution, their lives are changed for years to come change a life by giving a gift. Now, I understand the impact that shopping actually can have on a real human life. I'm not shopping just for a gift, maybe for me, or just for some random stuff. I'm shopping to get a gift for someone in need that can actually radically impact them. And by articulating the value proposition, even in just a couple of sentences and a headline, it led to a 35% increase in donations. We can't miss this in our emails.

Nathan (00:39:58):

We can't just assume people trust us and are ready to give. We have to articulate why they might give in a clear and meaningful way. And this is an interesting experiment as well, because in this email appeal, here's version a, it's more of a generic type of appeal. And then here's version B. It's trying to focus on the one to one impact that a donor can have and is having on a person. This organization is like a sponsorship type of organization where you know, me as a donor, I can sponsor a person sponsor a child. And my sponsorship provides them with a bunch of things that help better and improve their life and their livelihood version a talks about the other needs that exists in, in the lives of these children that are sponsored and asked for a donation in order to help offset some of the costs of these other needs.

Nathan (00:40:46):

But it's framed in a more generic way. Version B understands that I need to see the impact of my gift. And that leans into this concept in order to clearly articulate impact and lead to a hundred, 1% increase in donations, how do they do that? How did they do that in the copy? And we'll look at this, I'll highlight a couple of things for you. It says right off the bat, I want to take a minute and thank you for being a compassion sponsor. So it articulates to me that they knew who I am and they know the work that I'm already doing to make an impact. Excuse me, your monthly donation brings hope to Wayne. And I'm grateful that you faithfully give. So Wayne is, is in this case, is the sponsor the person that the donor sponsors. And then here, it says, here's something you might not know, sponsorship doesn't actually cover every need that went into family and friends encountered.

Nathan (00:41:34):

So then making this connection of the person that I give to as the donor, the person that I give to see the impact, and now expanding that to say, there's actually more that's needed here. They're drawing me in and showing me the potential of future impact. And then they're getting down to the bottom. I'm looking for 17 more sponsors to contribute to the where most needed fund. We scroll down. I'll highlight a couple more things, consider giving a gift to help cover additional needs help close out this goal of 17 sponsor gifts. So what they've done is they've, they've connected with me and in a meaningful way, helped me see the impact of the giving. I'm. I have already showing me the additional needs that exist, not just talking about it in a generic way, but connecting it back with something I care about.

Nathan (00:42:19):

And then now they're moving into the call to action using some additional incentives, like a goal here in order to get me to, to choose, to give now, rather than put off by giving maybe to later. And that's where I want to look at next is after you make this a meaningful value proposition, this meaningful appeal, again, articulating the problem, the solution and the impact. Now we're getting around to the call to action. The one thing you might do is add an incentive. An incentive is not a brand new reason why someone should give it's not your core value proposition, but it might be a reason to give now rather than later, it might also be a reason to give at a higher level. It's not a brand new reason to give us a reason to give now and to knock delay. And so there's lots of different types of incentives you might use.

Nathan (00:43:03):

You might have a clear deadline, you might have a clear goal. Maybe there's a free gift you can give us, or you can receive as like a thank you when you donate. Is there an opportunity to have your gift matched? And there could be a variety of other incentives as well, but this can be really effective. And we'll look at a couple experiments here also in immersion, a and this little giving widget, it talks about a

matching opportunity. We've received a a hundred thousand dollars challenge gift, but only if we raise a hundred thousand dollars before midnight, would you help? And at the top, they show this thermometer leading up to the goal. There are 88% of the goal when the screenshot was taken, version B takes a very different approach where their goal is not actually set around basically this financial goal that they're trying to hit this 88% of a hundred thousand dollars, they've actually taken a new approach so that I, the donor can clearly see the impact on the goal that I can make.

Nathan ([00:43:56](#)):

It's hard for me to see if I'm going to give a hundred bucks. It's hard for me to see how that really gets us that much closer to a goal of a hundred thousand dollars, but in version B, my one donation can get us to that two donor goal. There's two donations left to reach the goal. Well, I can be one of those donations, whether it's a $10 gift, a hundred dollar gift, a thousand dollar gift, I can help get closer to that goal. And by framing the goal in the incentive like that, rather than around the financial goal, focusing it on a donor goal actually led to a 25% increase in people clicking through to consider giving. So you may test some different types of incentives. See what's going to be most effective to get someone to choose, to give now, rather than later, here's an example of a match or a version a on this donation page, there is no matching opportunity, but version B, they put the sticky bar at the top.

Nathan ([00:44:47](#)):

It says, reminder, family of Kathy bluey will match your donation today up to $25,000 version B same match framed a little differently. It says the family of Kathy bluey is matching all donations today. So the difference being there's no match, there's a match and your gift is going to be matched. There's a matching. All gifts are going to be matched to these three different approaches. And what they found was that having a match and framing it around your gift is going to be matched, led to a 24% increase in giving. Now this other language framing led to an increase in giving, not quite at the level of confidence where they'd say like, yes, this is what we want to go with. But it's clear that a match leads to greater giving in this case. And we can frame it around your gift whose gift is going to be matched.

Nathan ([00:45:31](#)):

Who's impacted is going to be increased. Yours is to make sure that we make sure people know there's a match and frame it around the impact they can have. And here's one other incentive option for you just to show that you can also do something like this, give away a free gift as a thank you gift. When someone donates this could be effective for you as well. It led to a 92% increase in donations on this donation page. I would always test your incentives. So you knew exactly what type of impact they're having, but consider what types of incentives can you add to your appeal in order to get someone to choose, to give now rather than delay their giving. And then finally, we get to step number nine, the final step, which is give a clear call to action. And I'm going to emphasize the word clear that's to be abundantly clear what the next step is.

Nathan ([00:46:18](#)):

We don't want to ask the donors to do something vague and generic, like to stand with us or to give hope. When we say things like stand with us and we'll look at an experiment about that in a moment when we say things like stand with us, I'm not quite sure what the next step is. Is it to give it might be, or is it to volunteer or is it to sign a petition or is it to be some sort of advocate or is it to share this with somebody else? I don't really know. What's on the other side of a stand with us call to action. And at the

same, we don't want to ask someone to end world hunger. That's a huge problem to solve. And it's also not my job to do today. My next step in, in my role in this is to give and to donate.

Nathan ([00:47:03](#)):

So clearly articulate the next step, which is to donate. You can basically copy and paste the words you see on the screen. If you'd like, would you consider giving to this? Cause today you can make your donation here and use this raw URL, which is really just the www dot your domain slash give or whatever the URL is. Look at a couple of experiments here as well. Where in this experiment version eight says, please make your year-end gift to stand with our organization today. Now I just told you not to say, stand with us. And here's why, because saying stand with us led to a 91% increase in clicks, which sounds good because you got more people to click the link and actually go consider giving on the page. But here's, here's the kicker. It led to a 50% decrease in donations, vague call to actions, like learn more and stand with us or give hope.

Nathan ([00:47:58](#)):

Things like that. They call to actions, tend to lead to more people clicking because there's a lower level of commitment. When you're just asking someone to do something like learn more. I can click on that to go learn more. And that's great. That doesn't mean I have any sort of commitment to giving and in this case, a decreased donation. So we want to make sure to be clear that the next step is to give. And at the same time, we don't want to just use these HTML buttons that say something well, in this case, it's a, not a donation ask, but it says, add me to the list. Now it's an HTML designed button. That's version, a version B, instead of using those design buttons just uses again, what we call the raw URL. It's just putting in the URL right there of the domain.org/donate/whatever popping in pasting that just like a human being would do in the inbox and using that raw URL led to a 65% increase in people actually clicking on the call to action.

Nathan ([00:48:51](#)):

Now let's put it into practice a little bit. We were a little short on time, so we'll move fast through these and you can get the template and you can dive deeper into these examples. But I want to show you a couple quick examples of what this can look like, because I said at the beginning, there's no one right way to craft an email appeal. All these components need to be present in how you articulate your appeal, but they don't have to be in this perfect like cookie cutter formula. There's a lot of different variety in the approaches that you might take. And some are going to be more effective than others in different contexts with different donors in different audiences. But I want to give you a few ideas to consider how you might write your copy as you dial in your appeals for this giving season one is this clear problem solution framework. This organization is called Illinois policy Institute. They are in fact, a policy Institute in Illinois. Very self-explanatory very clear name. And I think policy groups like this can be a very clear example of this problem solution framework. So regardless of what you think about their policies, it's a really interesting appeal that I think shows this format very well for us.

Nathan ([00:50:01](#)):

And it starts with the problem. It's very clear. Here's the problem. You've probably heard our politicians. This is an Illinois specifically talk repeatedly about taxes, namely raising them. And none of us want to pay more in taxes. So that's, that's the problem. They're trying to increase taxes. And in the past month, they've proposed to increase your income taxes and payroll taxes and add a sales tax and services, even tax your sugary drinks. And particularly for this audience and this following this, as this is going to people

riled up this, this is the problem. We, we don't want to see this in our state is what people are saying. That's the problem they articulate. And then they move into the solution. And the solution is, is also very clear. The way out of the fiscal mess is through spending cuts, not through tax increases, that's their proposed solution to the problem of seeing taxes increasing.

Nathan (00:50:47):

Let's not increase them. Let's actually cut some spending and they move down into the impact. What's what's Mo if I'm the ideal donor, what's my role to play. My role to play here is that while there's something you can do to stop this right now, we have planned to balance the budget without a tax increase, and your donation will help get this plan in front of every lawmaker. So what's my role to play. What's the impact that I can make. I can help get this plan. That's going to solve the problem in front of as many people and as many lawmakers as possible, excuse me. And I can do that through a donation and they don't have an incentive, but then they move to the call to action. Here's a secure link to make your donation today and support this effort. Here's the URL. So very clear cut example, problem to solution impact, call to action.

Nathan (00:51:35):

This is actually an AB test where they tested two different approaches version a was all about finding more, finding out more about how you can be involved and how you can help version B drew people in to be part of the critical effort. And by framing it around your specific role to play, as opposed to this, like generic, let's find out more. It led to a 246% increase in donor conversion. So that's one example. Here's another one to show that this can be applied to even something like a recurring giving appeal. It's not just a one-time gift, but maybe becoming a monthly donor. And in this case, they're articulating the problems is from DTS. Again, they talk about the economic impact of COVID has been felt around the world. Job losses, pay cuts, and you know what? That's actually making it hard for some people to be able to attend and go to school.

Nathan (00:52:23):

So the solution they actually frame through the context of some quotes from a student that's benefited from the financial aid of this organization. I applied to DTA ETS, financial aid, and assisted me greatly financial support of friends of the seminary DTS has the opportunity to not only make a difference in the life of students like Alfred, but also in countless others. So that's the solution is people are, are, are struggling to make their payments. There's more financial aid that's needed. What's the impact you can have. Well, you can become a cornerstone partner, give DTS a solid base to create new initiatives in order to help students. That's your role and your impact to play as the donor. And now here's the, here's the, the critical part of this. What's the reason that I should, should give you a monthly gift as opposed to a one-time gift.

Nathan (00:53:10):

In this case, they clearly lay out the incentives. There's a $50,000 challenge opportunity where your gift can be matched. And as a monthly donor, instead of a one-time donor, you can get a copy of this commentary. You can get a subscription to our magazine. You can get early access to free courses, and you can get these semi-annual updates just for a monthly partners. So there's all these reasons to become a monthly donor, as opposed to just a one-time donor. That's really the critical takeaway here. There's a value proposition question here. Why should I become a monthly donor rather than just give you a one-time gift? You've got a clear call to action. Will you partner with DTS that's inserted right

here? And this was an AB test where both version a and version B articulate the same core value proposition, but version B lays out.

Nathan (00:53:56):

Why is it impactful to become a monthly donor instead of this one-time donor? And it led to 123% increase in donations. So consider adding these additional incentives to help people know why should I give at this higher level than to add a lower level? The next example. And I think we'll have two more. This one and another one testimonial driven example. This is sent from caring, bridge, caring bridge offers these different like a website journals for people going through different health care crises in order to stay connected with family and friends and, and people who love them and support them. And so this email was framed from the perspective of someone that had benefited from caring bridge. It has these same core kind of components explaining, you know, the problem solution, but helping you really see it through the eyes of biscuit beneficiary. And so here's what it says.

Nathan (00:54:42):

Donations to CaringBridge are going to be doubled today and tomorrow. And then they tell the story. Caringbridge helped my husband, Ben and me live in the whirlwind of three months in the NICU, after our twins were born and, and Mila were born in August. They didn't come home from the hospital until November. That's gotta be so hard as a, as a parent is to see that with your kids. But the outcome of our story is better than we could've ever imagined. A few months ago, I looked back at our site and I thought, I can't believe we went through all that. It was like, it happened to someone else you forget. And then the memories just come flooding back. I especially remember the hope and encouragement that came to my husband and me through hearing Gritch. So you see this like direct story that that's really meaningful because you hear it from a firsthand recipient of the care of, of caring bridge.

Nathan (00:55:27):

And then ultimately they make the donation appeal. And this was an experiment as well, where the first version was sent in from the CEO who can clearly speak with authority on the topic and knows the inner workings of the impact of caring bridge. But the CEO of caring bridge can't tell the same story that someone who's just benefited from their work until it's more impactful. And it led to a 54% increase in donations. So consider maybe using a testimonial as, as basically a storytelling device in order to articulate the problem solution and the impact. And then finally, a story driven appeal. I think this is an interesting approach that you can test into also for this organization. It's a Catholic missions organization. They sent version a, which has a direct appeal. And I highlighted a couple of things for you. They talk about in Texas.

Nathan (00:56:14):

Here's some things we're doing in Zambia. Here's some things that you can do in Tijuana, Mexico. Here's some things you can do. You can make a gift right now. It's more of a generic appeal talking a little bit about some of the areas of impact around the globe that they're they're making, but in version B, they wondered, well, what if we actually broke these different areas of impact out into these little like vignette stories? And so it's a much longer form appeal and I'll highlight just a couple of things for you instead of just saying we're making impact here and there and there, and here will you give, they're saying a new Orleans, here's a quick story of impact in Turkmenistan. Here's another story of impact in Haiti. Here's another story of impact and you scroll down, you've got a few more in Zambia. Here's something else that's that's happening.

Nathan ([00:56:57](https://example.com)):

Here's someone else who's been impacted. It. A lonely rancher in Texas has been impacted by this work until you want to Mexico. Here's another story of someone being impacted by this work. So they're telling all these little vignette stories in order to illustrate the scope of the impact that you, the donor can make. So not just framing it in a generic appeal, but giving you these inside stories to understand specifically, this is who I'm impacting, what I give, and then they make their ultimate donation appeal. You may never see the faces of the people you are serving, but you will know that your love and generosity will show them their worth. You can make your gift here right now. And by using this story-driven approach, it actually led to a 52% increase in giving. So again, this is an idea that you can test into.

Nathan ([00:57:42](https://example.com)):

Maybe you craft your initial appeal and think, are there stories that I can weave in here to really unpack it in a meaningful way? And you can test that. And so I'd want to leave you with a, is three there, obviously there's these nine steps and I'll have a link in a moment to get the template, but really three things to keep kind of a new back the back of your head all the time, which is number one. There's no just one correct way to craft an appeal. There are these core components we need to communicate, but there's a variety of ways that we can communicate our value proposition. Number two, what must always be true is we must communicate like a human because again, people give to people. And then thirdly, December 31st alone is not a reason to give. We have to clearly articulate impact and the, the problem that needs to be solved, the solution that's in place, in the role of the donor to make a meaningful impact, not just there's a deadline to give, but why should I give to you rather than to any of these other organizations trying to raise money on December 31st?

Nathan ([00:58:38](https://example.com)):

The last thing I'll give to you is the actual email appeal template. If you don't have it already, you can grab that URL. I think Riley, we'll put it in the chat here in a second, also where you can grab your phone, grab the QR code scan that and get your email appeal template. We'll also send this out later too. And then one other thing I want to leave you with as well is that we've got eight different certification courses available to you on demand that dive even deeper than what we've gone into today. Some on email, someone donation pages, we've got one on year-end fundraising. We've got some on testing copywriting and a whole bunch of other topics. I'd love for you to check this out. Kind of a no risk trial here. You can start for free for 30 days.

Nathan ([00:59:16](https://example.com)):

And then after that it's 49 bucks a month to stay connected to these courses, but you get access to these months certification cohorts to go through courses with other members, early access to new research and the next two slack community. So I'd continue or encourage you to check out a membership nextafter.com/start for free and start your free trial and see how you can continue to grow your online fundraising and your giving. Now we're right at 2 0 1. Thanks for sticking with me. I'm going to open the Q and a panel. If you've got some time to stick around for some questions, I will stick around for the next few minutes and try to answer as many as I can. Now I'm going to take a breather for just a moment and throw it to Riley. Riley. Are there any critical questions that you've seen come up throughout the we should start with?

Riley ([01:00:08](https://example.com)):

Yeah, so it looks like there's, there are some reoccurring questions that I'm seeing. So let me just find one here for you. A lot of people had questions about addressing their donors in the greeting. If they're not able to have their donors first name, how to address them. Yeah. So if you could go over that a little bit, that would be great. Okay.

Nathan (01:00:36):

Yeah, that's a great, that's a great question. Number one, I kind of said this, but I'll re I'll, I'll say it again. Cause I think it's as important. If you don't have the ability to insert your donor's first name into your emails. I, that's probably not the most important thing that's on your brain right now, going into December and into this critical giving season. But I would put that really near the top of your list for a variety of reasons. I'd put the near the top of your list as you go into the new year to make sure that you can find a tool that can do that because if your tool cannot insert like the first name, there's a lot of opportunity. You're probably missing even just in that one tactic, but it likely means that the tool you have, doesn't give you a different automation opportunities and segmentation opportunities to craft messaging.

Nathan (01:01:20):

That's going to be really relevant to your audience. So if you don't have that capability, yet, December is probably not the right time to go launch a brand new tool, but I would consider, excuse me going into January 20, 22, starting to look for an email tool that can do some more of these slightly more complex things with your email fundraising and email marketing. Now, if you don't have that opportunity to insert a first name, whether it's because of the tool or maybe you just don't have the data yet, one thing that, and this is not proven, this is kind of a, this is my best guess based on what we've seen in other data, I would hesitate to just openly say things like hi friend, because that's sort of a dead giveaway that like, I don't really know you, I'm kind of pretending to know you by calling you friend, but, but I don't really know you. And so that could potentially be a turnoff to someone cause they can kind of see through a, see through the charade a little bit here. So you might just say, hi, Hey, hope you're having a great morning. Something like that. That sounds casual. That sounds warm. That sounds human. And that sounds inviting without openly saying, Hey, I don't know you, but in sending you an email asking you for money anyway. So that's kind of a fine line to walk there.

Nathan (01:02:34):

Let's see. I'll keep kind of scrolling through the Q and a here. Riley, if you see any in here feel free to shout them out as well. I see a question from Isaac. What formula or format would you suggest for E newsletter subject lines? Quite honestly, Isaac, I would still use that same exact subject line worksheet that I showed you earlier. There's a lot of different ideas in there to craft a subject line. So those ideas are not just specific to a donation appeal. Granted they can be effective for a donation appeals also, but that can be a great way to position your newsletter as well. Making sure that people know that there's value on the inside of it, not giving every single thing away in the subject line, but creating some level of mystery. So I wouldn't consider those as two fundamentally different things.

Nathan (01:03:17):

Tactics use over here on donation. Appeals can be effective over here on e-newsletters as well. Question from Sean. Hi, how many emails do I send before I remove the contact due to no activity other than reading it? This there's not an abundantly clear answer here. And I think it's maybe becoming a bit more complicated as things like open rates become less and less reliable in some for a long time, open rates

have not been reliable. And then as the, as more tools that have different like preview panes and things to read the email without opening it, well, it doesn't actually trigger images to be downloaded, which doesn't actually trigger an open in your email tracking tools. So it's really unreliable in the first place and getting worse. But then at the same time iOS 15 has started to roll out and many iOS, 15 users as they the email gets downloaded to the phone and to the device.

Nathan (01:04:15):

It actually triggers the open right away. And so that's not a true open. It's not a real open. No, one's actually opened your email yet, but your platform might tell you that they have. So it's a really unreliable metric at this point to use as a measure of activity. So I'd encourage you number one, to, to find a more meaningful metric for you, whether that's email clicks or that's actual visits to a landing page visits on your website, or maybe it's donations consider finding a more meaningful metric to use as your point of, of measuring engagement. And then from there you know, if someone's not engaging after this is just, I'm kind of throwing out a number here, but maybe it's four months or six months. Maybe that's a time to start to put them on a, on a suppression list and also start to craft maybe some re-engagement campaigns to reach out to those people in and make sure they still want to hear from you. There's a lot more we could dive into there, Sean, but hopefully that's helpful.

Nathan (01:05:10):

Let's see as I'm about to write email appeals or appeal letters to my donors, how do I know donors names? So as to them, by their name again, you would capture that information as you're collecting email addresses on a form on your website, whether it's a newsletter sign up or maybe something in the footer, if you're running a lot of direct mail, there might be opportunity to use direct mail as a means of getting emails from offline donors. There's a lot of different ways, but anytime you're interacting with a donor where they've got to fill out some sort of form, I would be asking for their name and their email and not just their email address, but also who they are. What's their first name, last name.

Riley (01:05:46):

And Nathan, there were a lot of questions about the length of the email copy. Like how long is too long, how short is too short. How do you determine how much copy to write in your emails?

Nathan (01:05:56):

Let's say that's a great question. It's a pretty common question. But I think in some ways, the question kind of in some ways misses the point because it's not really a question of long versus short. There's not an ideal perfect length of copy. That's going to be the perfect amount of characters and words in order to lead to more giving it's about having the right copy. Sometimes the right copy to articulate. Why should I give to you rather than to some other organization or not at all that value proposition question, sometimes the right copy is going to take you a long time to write, but sometimes the right copy is actually shorter. So you have to, you have to test into these things. In some cases you might write a ton of copy and actually lose people because it's not clear and you might need to be more succinct. In other cases, maybe you're explaining, you know, a problem that's kind of complex. You actually might need some more copy to articulate the true problem and the true impact that someone can have. So I would try to, as much as you can train your brain to not think about what's the right amount of copy, but actually test into what is the right word, what are the right words? What is the right messaging? And sometimes that might mean you write some really long copy.

Nathan (01:07:07):

Anything else that stands out to you? Raleigh, any, any themes that have come up as we're running short on time here, but I'd like to answer a few more if we can.

Riley (01:07:16):

Yeah. I'm just browsing through them here. It seems like a lot of people had some of the same questions. So I'm just trying to find which ones those were. Oh, there was a question about I don't remember the exact wording or who said it, but someone had asked if it's okay to ask ask their donors to do multiple things in one email, or if you should break those things up between different emails on a campaign.

Nathan (01:07:42):

That's the one I would almost in any case and you might, you might, he might even apply this to a newsletter. It's at least testable. If you want someone to take one action, ask them to take one action. I wouldn't have conflicting calls to action inside of the same email, especially when it relates to giving. If you're asking someone to donate, don't say learn more and give and go watch this video. Because if there's a few things that might happen, number one, they might do the thing that you don't actually want them to do. If you want them to give, they might go click, learn more, to learn more and then get lost all the way over here and never come back to giving. So just give them one call to action at the same time, if you have multiple calls to action, especially if they aren't clearly related, you might be causing a lot of confusion and what we would call decision friction.

Nathan (01:08:27):

You know, why, why should I do this one or this one? Maybe I don't have enough context to choose which one is the right call to action for me, maybe I ended up doing nothing and I just closed the email and I walk away. So I would make sure you have one singular call to action. The only caveat would be like a newsletter. If you're trying to just share some recent blog posts or stories, but even then, you're going to most likely see more clicks to your blogs and articles. If you have a singular focus call to action.

Nathan (01:08:57):

I saw a question in here from someone anonymous. I encourage you to put your name in here just so we can make a real human connection here, but a question from an anonymous attendee, have these tests been conducted over different clients and more than once? Yes. I think everything that I shared with you today, all these different principles that we've talked about, for sure these are things that we've not just tested one time, because oftentimes you might test, you might test tactic number one, one time over here, this organization in this context and see it work, that's it over here. And it gets a slightly different result. And so what we're trying to do is test these things across as many clients as we can, as many organizations as we can in different contexts in order to extract the principles that worked. So everything that I'm sharing with you, unless I've said like, absolutely test this.

Nathan (01:09:42):

Cause sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't, all these principles have been tested over and over repeatedly. So you can be confident that they're going to work for you. I would also say always put new ideas to the test. So you know exactly the impact they're having and that can make sure that you're always moving in the right direction. It's going to help you learn more about your donors. And then also

might be something that you can go you have kind of on your resumes. You go talk about like, how can I get a raise in my job? Well, here's, here's the proof that the things I've been implementing are actually leading to growth in results. So there might be a lot of reasons to make sure you put them to the test. Any other lingering questions here that you see Riley, we should answer before we wrap up here.

Riley ([01:10:26](#)):

There's nothing that's sticking out to me. I feel like we covered the big ones, so,

Nathan ([01:10:30](#)):

Right. Awesome. Well, if there's additional questions, things we haven't quite covered, feel free to reach out to me. You should have my email address again. We'll send you an email later this evening with a link to the recording and links to some of the resources and things that we've mentioned today. I hope this is helpful for you. I hope it's meaningful for you, and I hope it leads to the best giving season that you have had the best year end that you've had. You have any questions that come up again, feel free to reach out to me. I'd love to be a support and a resource for you as you move into this critical month of giving. So best of luck, we're rooting for you all the time and we'll see you next time.