

CUSTOMER STORY

How Northwestern University Dance Marathon Powers Tradition With Modern Fundraising Technology



IN OPERATION SINCE
1975

YEARS USING CLASSY
3

TOTAL RAISED IN 2016
\$1,201,216

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
0
(RUN ENTIRELY
BY STUDENTS)

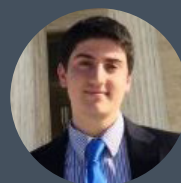
A LEGACY OF GIVING BACK

The Northwestern University Dance Marathon (NUDM) is one of the oldest and largest student-run philanthropic organizations. Entering its 43rd year, NUDM brings together more than 1,000 students each spring to fundraise for a charitable beneficiary and take on an epic challenge: to dance for 30 hours straight.

Since its founding in 1975, NUDM has raised more than \$17 million for organizations such as the Evanston Community Foundation, American Epilepsy Foundation, and Blessings in a Backpack. **Last year's dance marathon was their most successful fundraising event yet, raising \$1,201,216.** And the vast majority of those funds were raised by student participants.

The first step to their runaway peer-to-peer success is getting as many people registered as they can. For one week in November, Northwestern University focuses on recruiting dancers from every corner of the campus. The latest features and campaign options on Classy make this process easier for the students who organize the event and recruit fundraisers.

“ Using the Registration with Fundraising campaign allowed us to focus less on getting pages set up, collecting fees, and things like that, and focus more on actually getting people to want to participate.”



NATE KORN
Finance Co-chair of NUDM



HOW NUDM SETS 1,000 FUNDRAISERS UP FOR SUCCESS

"We provide resources constantly to all of our teams and individual participants. We have deadlines to promote certain fundraising benchmarks to help people move along," said Korn. NUDM created their own fundraising guide to help students reach out to friends and family and meet their goals. The organization then passed on tips and fundraising opportunities to students.

One of NUDM's biggest strengths is how it uses team fundraising to make sure fundraisers are supported and guided toward success. Often the teams are connected to clubs or student groups at Northwestern and the team captain chooses their successor. Just as the NUDM committee chairs pass on their positions, each team has a champion months ahead of time.

"Last year we moved to a Registration with Fundraising model where we were able to utilize everything from peer-to-peer, but we no longer needed to send an extra email to everyone who registered saying, 'Okay, here's how to set up the page.' The registration was setting up the page. That was where we saw the biggest improvement last year and what we're trying to build off of this year."

NATE KORN

Finance Co-chair of NUDM

THE FREEDOM TO FUNDRAISE 'TIL THE VERY END

Although the idea of asking friends and family for donations isn't new at NUDM, the latest online peer-to-peer fundraising technology has proved a perfect match for the millennial generation. Students can customize their pages, promote them on social media, and email their networks from their laptops, tablets, or smartphones. For students balancing classes, jobs, hobbies, and social events, the ability to fundraise anywhere, anytime is a huge plus.

And the donations don't stop when fundraisers hit the dance floor. NUDM used Classy to track their campaign progress throughout their 2016 event, which allowed them to update the dancers and encourage them to keep reaching out to friends and family. With mobile-responsive fundraising pages, dancers could track their personal progress and text or call their network to get those final donations in.

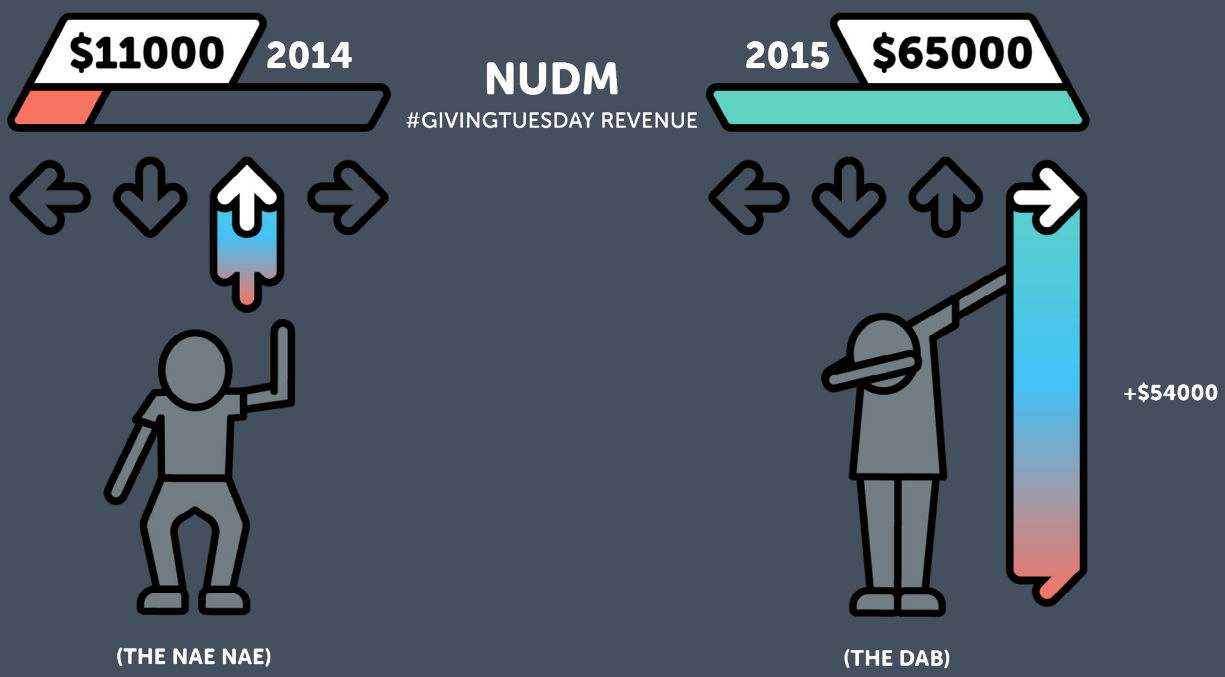
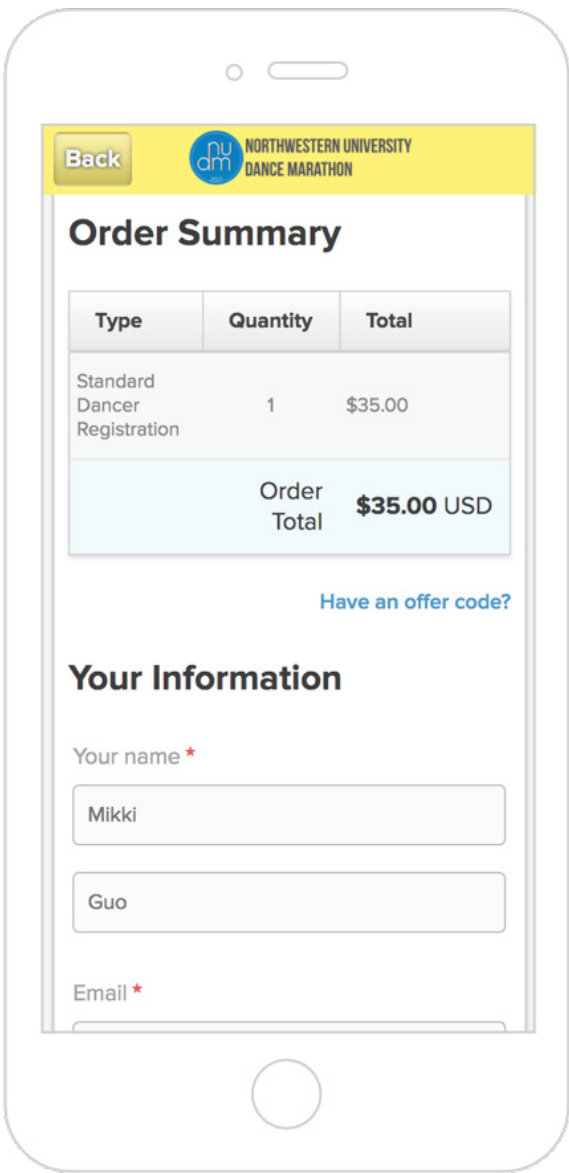
The ability to track their progress and fundraise from the dance floor helped NUDM raise \$37,000 during the event and secure a matching gift of \$10,000.

NUDM MARRIES TRADITION WITH TECHNOLOGY FOR FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

For an event like the Northwestern University Dance Marathon, which is run by a new group of students each year, having an easy-to-use platform is absolutely essential. Not only can organizers set up the campaign to reflect the organization’s brand, but the students who fundraise can set up personalized pages in just minutes. Registration with Fundraising makes signing up for the event and fundraising a cohesive process, saving time and resources that might have been spent on a multi-step process.

“Dancers were actually texting and emailing their friends and family from their phones, saying, ‘Hey, I’ve been in the event for 12 hours now. We only have 18 hours left to support these amazing organizations. Do you mind giving five more dollars?’ We really generated a lot of money through small donations. We saw a lot of \$10 to \$15 donations come in.”

NATE KORN
Finance Co-chair of NUDM





The easy process of customizing and updating campaigns also allowed NUDM to promote #GivingTuesday in 2015 to kick off their campaign and help fundraisers build momentum early. This helped NUDM increase their #GivingTuesday revenue by more than 500 percent!

After the giving day, NUDM simply edited their campaign page to focus on the upcoming dance marathon. This flexibility is ideal for an extended campaign because organizers and fundraisers can adapt their pages and appeals to each opportunity along the way.

One of the most impressive parts of NUDM is how they mobilize and communicate with so many peer-to-

peer fundraisers. The ability to set up teams that can communicate and encourage each other ensures that each fundraiser has support.

Perhaps most importantly, having a reliable, mobile-responsive online platform gives Northwestern students the power to fundraise at

their convenience. And the ability to track their progress means students can keep appealing for and collecting donations until the very last dance. No matter where their families and friends are, they can help their students with a donation of any size.

Classy

Learn how Classy's all-in-one fundraising platform support your campaigns.

Take a Tour

