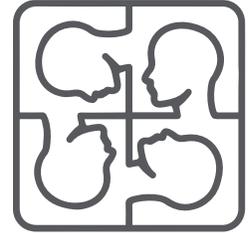


Help Center

**ENGAGE YOUR
AMBASSADORS**

4

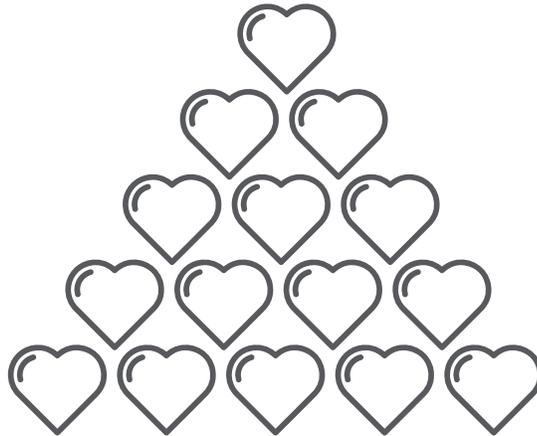




Ambassadors: Your Secret Weapon

Successful initiatives are rarely staffed completely within the scope of a single organization. In order to maximize your reach, you'll need to expand your circle beyond your immediate team. This is where volunteers and ambassadors come in. Your volunteer and ambassador network is made of people both inside and outside of your organization who are passionate about promoting your cause. These people may share your posts and hype your fundraiser to their respective networks, or they may help with some of the behind-the-scenes work of your initiative. No matter how they contribute, they are all essential.

All ambassadors are volunteers, but not all volunteers are ambassadors. While volunteers may help with an event or project for a day or two, ambassadorship implies a stronger relationship with your organization and a more passionate commitment to your cause. Ambassadors may lend their time, energy, skills, and voice to your cause because they truly believe in and stand by your mission, values, and work. They feel connected to the cause—maybe as much as you do. Cultivate those relationships and look for a similar passion in your less-regular volunteers. You may be able to turn a one-time interaction into the beginning of a long, strong relationship.



Building Your Ambassador Base

Beyond converting existing volunteers into ambassadors, how do you find these amazing helpers? It's easier than you think. This is a call to action in its own way. When possible, be specific about what needs to be done and direct in asking for assistance for those tasks. Have a conversation with your potential ambassadors, those most likely to step up when you need them.

The people who are passionate enough about your organization to advocate and assist are probably already connected to it. Look to your inner circle first and branch out. Your board and employees are already doing the work, but make sure that they're sharing information about your initiative on their personal networks. Additionally, they probably have a sense of who among their friends, family, and connections will fight for this cause. Ask them to recommend or bring in people who they think can be the biggest help.

Previous recurring or major donors also fall into this readily accessible category. If they've made a substantial contribution, they must care about the cause. If they've donated multiple times, then they must follow you at least enough to hear about a new initiative and respond positively to it. Send a personalized email, note, or direct message to some of these people and ask them if they'd like to get involved in the process. Individuals or groups who are sponsoring a match or challenge, or any businesses who may have partnered with your organization to do the same, should be encouraged to spread the word about said match or challenge. They have their own circles who may not all know about your project. Every person who promotes your organization on their personal accounts expands your sphere of influence in directions that you may not have otherwise reached.



In addition to those who give to your organization, don't ignore those who receive from it. Depending on your cause, you may be able to reach out to someone who received your help and wants to give back or has a particularly compelling story. If you have records of individual recipients at your disposal, reach out to ask if anyone would be comfortable sharing their story. They may choose to share on their own platforms, but they may also help you put together a story that describes the impact of your organization with a personal touch. They can, of course, contribute beyond telling their story if they wish to, but their perspective is a powerful component of your initiative that only they can provide.

When it comes to seeking people out, the most important factors to consider for any demographic are a passion for your mission and a willingness and ability to help. If you notice that someone in your network of donors, followers, or recipients seems like a social media guru with a noteworthy following, ask them to promote you. If someone has a skill that your team lacks, ask them to help. If people are local, provide opportunities to volunteer in person when you need assistance. Although your asks for donations show clearly in your fundraising totals, your asks for help show in the process and can be just as important to the operation of your initiative.

Even if you think you've reached everyone, you may still have untapped resources among your followers. Include an opt-in option somewhere on your website where people can sign up to receive information about volunteer opportunities and similar projects. This doesn't need to be the most active of your segmented email lists, but it does remind you that you have people ready and willing to help when the time comes.

What Your Ambassadors Can Do For You

There are many levels of involvement ranging from sharing small communications to committing to an in-person event; no contribution is too small when you're running a major initiative.

Communication is one of the simplest ways an ambassador can help out. You want to raise the most money and reach the most people you possibly can; every person who adds their voice will broaden your circle and find new people who may otherwise be unconnected. Social media is an easy way to do this, but more direct, personal communication is also important. Peer-to-peer fundraising can yield incredible strides toward achieving your goals and stretch goals. By asking ambassadors to appeal directly to individuals in their networks, you add more than new faces—you add man- (or woman-) power. Consider the growth you'll see if each peer-to-peer fundraising ambassador reaches out to even 5 people through phone calls, emails, texts, DMs, or some other medium. You include people who you may not have been able to reach, but also who you may not have had time to talk to otherwise. It takes time to have a conversation, draft a letter, or personalize a message. That's part of the reason segmented mailing lists are popular; they allow you to send more direct and targeted appeals quickly and en masse. While segmented mailing lists are very important and do work, asks are certainly more compelling from friends than they are from strangers.

Additional legwork that ambassadors may be able to help with includes making cold calls and writing letters and thank you notes. Again, these are time-consuming activities that your busy team may not be able to



prioritize. The personal touch of a phone call or handwriting instead of a typed form letter, however, makes a world of difference to the recipient. These small factors make donors feel appreciated and valued, and thus more inclined to maintain a relationship with your organization. If you have an event in conjunction with your initiative, ambassadors who volunteer to help set up or run elements like registration will be invaluable, freeing up your team to play hosts, network with participants, and log donations.

If you have skilled ambassadors who are willing to contribute pro bono work, don't be afraid to take them up on it. Components like video editing, photography, graphic design, and copywriting make up a huge part of your initiative. They also require time and training. If your team is short a skill for something in your vision for the initiative, or if you have a skilled person but too much for them to do, an ambassador may be able to fill that gap. Do you have one videographer but four videos on a time-sensitive to-do list? Are all your photographers also core members of your team who will be tied up on the day of the event? Do you know exactly the story you want to tell but the words just aren't coming? Ask a trusted ambassador to step in.

What You Can Do For Your Ambassadors: Two Toolkits

There's a lot more to maintaining an ambassador base than simply saying "Hey, can you help?" and then turning them loose with your project. While your ambassadors may totally be on the same page as you in terms of your organization's mission and goals, they may not be completely aware of or in sync with your vision for this particular initiative. They're going above and beyond to help you maximize your impact and reach your goals, so make it as easy as possible for them to be involved. They want to be here with you; don't give them a hard time figuring out how to do that. In the long run, you'll save more time by having people contribute their work and voices than the time you'll spend putting a toolkit together to tell your story and help them do the same.

Your toolkit should consist of several components. Some people will require less information and some will require more depending on how they are contributing, but everyone needs to know a few basics. Consider this list as a main touchstone toolkit to be shared with all ambassadors:

Background Information: Your Organization—This is a brief refresher course on your background and mission. Your ambassador should already be familiar, if they are willing to step into this role for you, but take a moment to reassert who you are and why you're here. Roughly 1-3 sentences.

Vital Links—You want to easily be able to create buzz and direct it appropriately. Make sure people know where to go with that buzz. Your website link, donation page, hashtag, and social media accounts should be prominent and clear here. For the main website and hashtag, you may even want them displayed multiple times, such as at the top and bottom. It's a small but vital piece of information; make sure it's very present.

Elevator Pitch—You don't need to pitch to your ambassadors, but they'll probably need to pitch



your initiative to others. What are some of the most salient facts and compelling details you can share? 2-5 sentences or bullets.

Main Goals—What is the primary goal you're trying to reach? Frame this in terms of impact as well as dollars. If there are stretch goals you feel confident about releasing early, you may include them but ask ambassadors to keep them in their back pocket until the time is right to make the stretch goals public. The same goes for matches and challenges. Roughly 1-2 sentences or bullets, depending on the number of goals included.

Funds Allocation—Many donors want to know what percent of their donation actually goes to the cause. This doesn't need to take up a lot of real estate in your guide, but it can be a major talking point for some donors. Give your ambassadors this answer before anyone even asks to help them feel prepared and comfortable. 1 sentence.

Important Dates—Your day of giving may be just one day, but there can be other important dates surrounding it. Note when your giving day is this year, whether there are any events (dates and times) to go with it, and if you're hosting a soft launch. If you have a countdown or other features leading up to the big day, mention those as well. Can be bullets, as many as necessary.

Expectations—If there are any general expectations or guidelines for your ambassadors to follow, be sure to include them. This may include a brief description of their potential role, suggestions for how to get involved, a sample posting schedule, or any key words or actions you'd like them to incorporate. If there are any common miscommunications or misconceptions that may pop up when someone else is helping to tell your story, this may be a good place to note those to prevent accidental misrepresentation of your organization. Aim for concise, but make it as long as necessary to incorporate your specific information.

Contact Person—Any ambassadors who are doing specialized work will probably have a primary contact, but you should also designate one person to answer general questions. If you already have a volunteer coordinator, this would be their territory. If not, appoint someone who can be easily reached and is willing to field questions.

In addition to these elements, it's a good idea to include information and assets that will be helpful for storytelling and social media. This portion can be included with or separate from the above information, and can be further divided into a social media toolkit and a more in-depth storytelling kit if you so desire.

Handles, Links, and Hashtags—Make sure that all of your platforms are represented, including your main website and donation page. This allows your ambassadors to interact with your digital presence in many ways while directing followers back to the source.

Attention-getting Info—If you're including a separate storytelling section, you can save some of the



more specific details for later, but some powerful statements and information on your work will be useful in a basic social media toolkit. Having this information easily accessible to your ambassadors means a wider variety of content available for posts beyond your templated messages. 1-3 sentences with your most compelling data or hero stories.

Templated Posts—Not every ambassador will cut and paste from these templates, but they'll provide a good example structure and lay out your expectations regarding what you'd like them to say. Include templates for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram with suggestions CTAs and context. Provide options for the lead up, the day of, a challenge or match if applicable, and a thank-you for after your Giving Day concludes. Aim for 1-2 brief posts per platform and subject, roughly 9-20 posts total. You may organize this with bullets or a table. We've included samples for a few different project types:

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
Lead-up	@YourOrg is making a difference to unemployed students and community members by providing interview outfits and resume consults to help people get back on their feet. Join me next week to help make #ProjectFreshStart a success!	We're fast approaching an important project and need your help! Follow @YourOrg to learn about how they're helping people in our community and how you can get involved with #NoPlaceLikeHome	I give because 1 in 10 of our neighbors go hungry every night. Join me in feeding our community! Share an #UNselfie to show why you're helping @YourOrg with #SampleFoodProject.
Giving Day	When schools are in trouble, arts programs are often the first to go. @YourOrg is pushing back by donating art supplies and instruments to local students. Your contribution will help kids #PlayAct-DrawDance their hearts out! Donate today to maximize your impact.	The race is on! @YourOrg's day of giving ends at midnight and they're trying to give away as many shoes as they can to kids in need before time is up. Donate now and help kids put their #BestFootForward	#BeeKind to your neighborhood! @YourOrg is planning a garden of pollinators' favorite plants. Support the bee population and beautify our city by chipping in to buy a flower. The greenhouses are ready!
Challenge/ Match	Bow-WOW! It's challenge time! The fundraising team that raises the most money before noon gets to name one of the service dogs that @YourOrg will provide through #FurryFriends. Ask your friends and family to join in and give back. No contribution is too small!	@SoandSoVetSponsor have issued a challenge for @YourOrg! For the next hour, they'll vaccinate one dog or cat for every new donor who contributes to #ShelterHelpers. If you haven't donated yet, now is the time!	How can you say no to this face? @YourOrg is helping this endangered species make a comeback and @GenerousBacker is matching contributions up to \$20,000. Donate to #DoZoo today and it'll go twice as far!
Thanks	Thank you so much to everyone who donated to #HospitalHelpers today! Because of your contributions, @YourOrg can provide housing for the families of 50 patients who have traveled from out of state to seek treatment here. Now they can focus solely on their loved ones' healing. Love and support are truly incredible medicines!	Thank you, everyone!! Your donations to #ToastyCoats helped @YourOrg give 300 winter coats to people in need. It warms my heart to see people coming together for a good cause!	Look what you've helped make possible! Thanks to everyone who donated to #BrownBagBuffet, @YourOrg was able to pack 1,000 lunches for city shelters. You're all heroes in my book!



Image Assets—Think of image assets mostly in terms of profile pictures, cover photos, and feed photos that highlight your graphics and logo. If you have additional powerful photos, like hero shots, feel free to include one or two, but you don't need to make them the focus of this section. Have your image assets tailored to fit the various formats and make them accessible for download on your website, through a file sharing site like Google Docs, Outlook, or Dropbox, or in an email sent to your ambassadors. Include cover and profile photos for Facebook and Twitter and feed photos for Instagram.

#UNselfie Basics—Explain briefly what an #UNselfie is and include a template or sign for people to fill in and take pictures with. This should be a sentence or two of description with a clean template on a full, separate page

Major Talking Points and Striking Statistics—If you decide to feature more detailed information or a secondary storytelling toolkit for your ambassadors to peruse and possibly include in their messaging, include it here. This may be in the form of bullets or paragraphs and can incorporate hero stories, testimonies, statistics about the need for this work, plans for using the funds raised, or whatever you feel is important, compelling, and interesting enough to share. If this is included within the social media toolkit, keep it fairly contained in light of all the other information that will be in this document.

Our Guides For You



[Constructing A Social Media Toolkit](#)



[Strategizing With A Communications Toolkit](#)

Sample Toolkits For Your Ambassadors



[Colorado Mesa University Foundation](#)



[The University of Delaware](#)



What You Can Do For Your Ambassadors: Additional Resources For Skilled Work

If your ambassadors are contributing pro bono skilled work like video editing or graphic design instead or in addition to making asks, sharing communication, or volunteering an event, make sure that your vision is clearly communicated to them in advance. Again, their assistance takes a weight off your team, so you want to be as clear and direct as possible to help them help you. If there is anything you definitely want to be included or excluded, be up front about it.

Beyond communicating your expectations or intentions, be sure that they can also communicate easily with you should the need arise during the process. Rather than assigning them to a general volunteer coordinator, provide contact information for the team member most closely associated with their project. This will likely be someone in marketing or social media, but may vary depending on the project and your team.

Be respectful and supportive of your ambassador team and they'll do the same for you. If you don't have an ambassador network in place already, what better time can there be to start one than for your big event? A committed group of people will stay with you for many projects to come and can be depended on for their enthusiasm and dedication. They are an asset to any fundraising initiative.