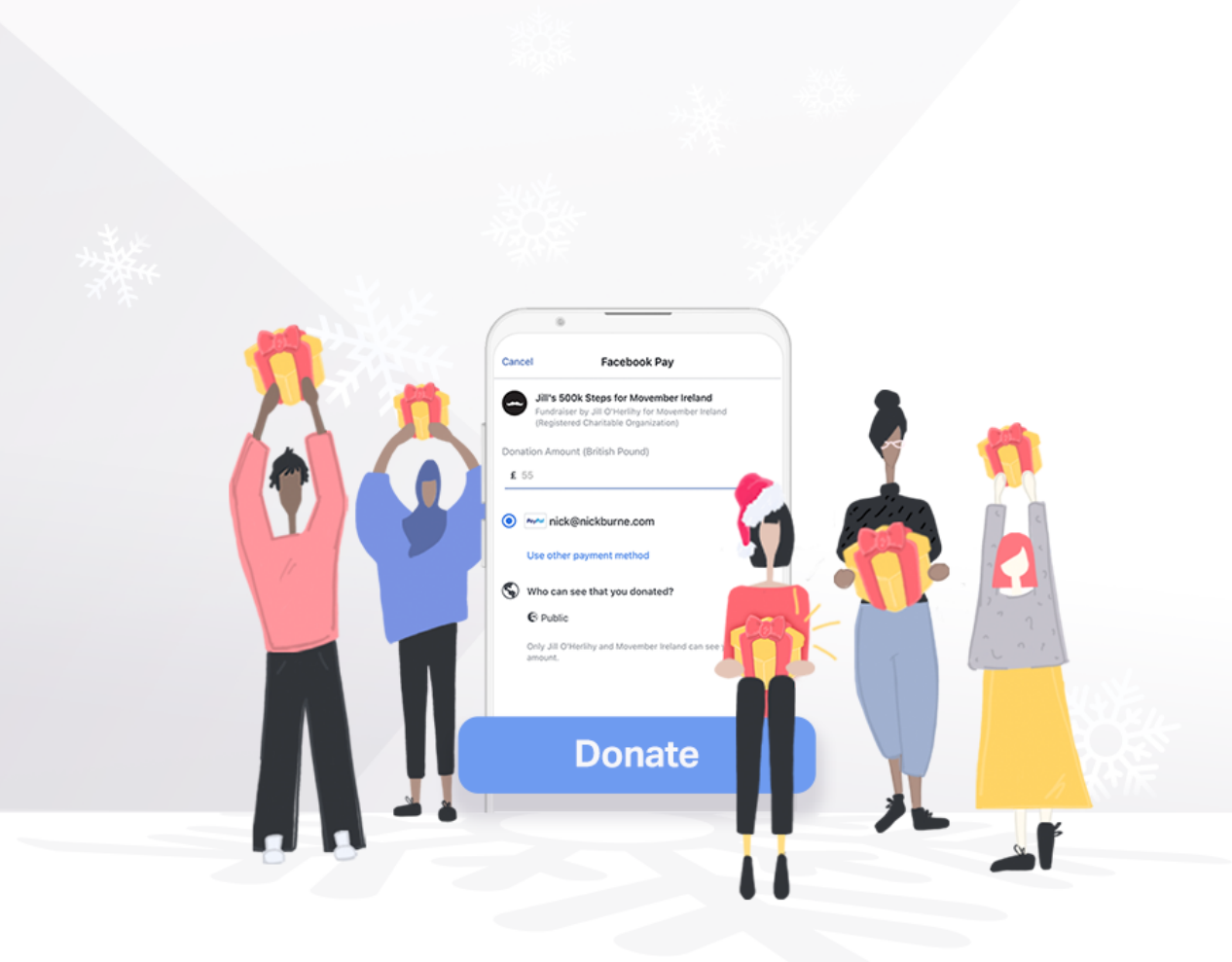


**givepanel**

## 15 Experts Share Their Best Facebook Fundraising Tips for the Holiday Season

November 2020



## Experts Share Their Best Facebook Fundraising Tips for the Holiday Season

Looking to drive up the number of donations you get over the holiday season?

It's traditionally known as the time of giving. The average number of donations to charity rises throughout the month of December because [5% more people](#) give throughout this period, compared to the rest of the year.

But you want to make sure your nonprofit is on their donation list before Christmas rolls around.

The good news: Facebook is a superb way to do that.

So, what fundraising activities should you be doing on Facebook in the run-up to Christmas?

We asked 15 fundraising experts exactly that. This guide shares their answers.

## 01

**Run a Black Friday-themed fundraiser**

It's no secret that Black Friday is one of the biggest shopping days of the entire year. Shoppers in the UK are expected to [spend £6 billion](#) on Black Friday this year alone.

[Trude Jacobsen](#) is the Founder and Secretary General of Dråpen i Havet/A Drop in the Ocean. She thinks you should hop onto these traditionally retail trends with your Facebook fundraising campaigns this holiday season—and get a slice of the \$3 billion raised through Facebook's Giving Tools.



*"We have launched a Black Friday-themed Facebook Fundraiser where our aim is to raise a fraction of the €400,000,000 Norwegians will spend on Black Friday. For this campaign, we are scrapping one of the most important things we know about Facebook Fundraisers."*

*"The playbook tells you to start with a realistic target, and then adjust it whenever you reach it. Our initial target for this campaign is high by our normal standards, at €40,000, but it looks small compared to the Black Friday spending predictions."*

*However, Trude says: "By comparing these numbers, we hope to highlight how much money we spend on things we don't need, and how little it takes to make a difference."*

*"Facebook Ads will be used to recruit new regular donors for 2021, and we are planning to run ads to recruit fundraisers for what we think will be the first Facebook Challenge in Norway."*

## 02

**Launch a 'Get fit in January' fundraising campaign**

Fundraisers work so well because your donors are already connected with their family and friends on Facebook. By convincing them to run a fundraising campaign for your nonprofit, you reach a whole new network of supporters—and potentially raise more money in the process.

Marco Kuntze is a Peer to Peer and Facebook fundraising expert at [Relishing Digital](#), where he helps progressive non-profits of all sizes to design and deliver amazing digital fundraising campaigns.

He recommends tying in this fundraising element with New Year's resolutions:



*"The holidays are a time for overindulgence. But amongst all the delicious food, festive drinks and many cosy hours curled up in front of the television, most people are pretty keen to get active and healthy again in January. This is an excellent opportunity to encourage your supporters to raise money while they get in shape."*

(It's true: as many as [26 million people](#) will try to lose weight in January.)

Marco explains how you can use this new motivation to run Facebook fundraisers:

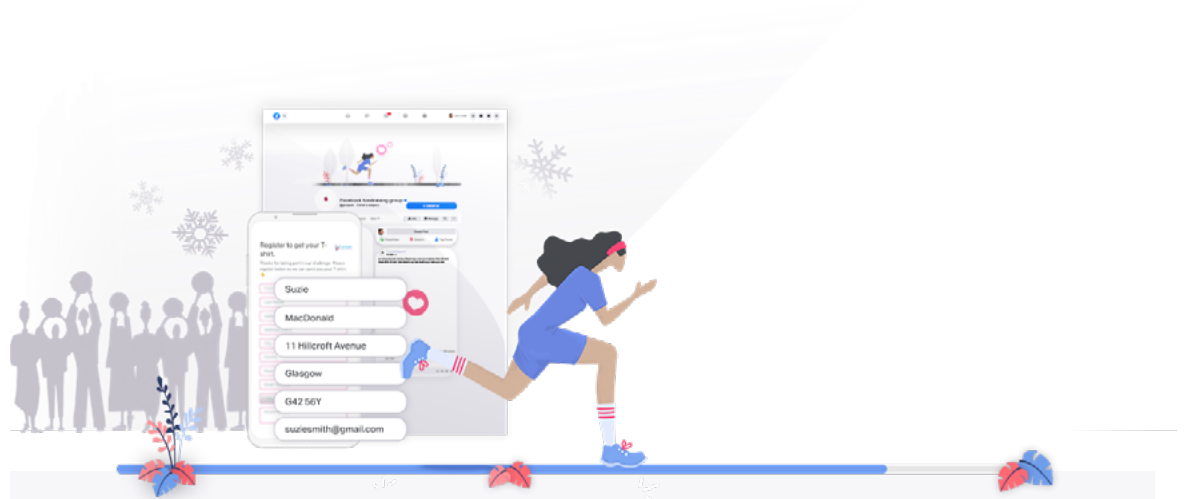
*"Invite them to give up alcohol or chocolate, or to walk 10,000 steps a day while raising money on their Facebook fundraising page."*

*"It's something they already want to do, you're just giving them a meaningful reason and some extra motivation."*

*"Provide participants with lots of encouragement and tips—and remember to make it fun! Let them share their photos and personal experience in a dedicated Facebook group for the campaign."*

Finally, Marco recommends to

*“Keep it simple. Make it super easy to sign up and let people know they can take part on their own, or invite friends to join them easily.”*



### The best part?

You can use GivePanel to see your Facebook fundraisers, attribute them to different events and capture their contact information. It also helps you reach out to them more easily and get them to raise more.

## 03

### Publish fundraising-related organic content

Alongside your active fundraiser, [Carla Anikah](#), the Head of Fundraising & Communications at Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland, recommends posting organic content to coincide with your campaign. She also just won Professional Fundraiser of the Year in Ireland.



*“Since January this year more than 60% of our income has come from Facebook fundraising and much of this is from new supporters.”*

*“So as the year draws to a close I will be using Facebook to engage with supporters new and old and share the impact of their support.”*

Carla explains.

*“It seems fitting that we utilise the platform that led them to support our cause to thank them and showcase the impact they have had. We don’t run a big end of year campaign but we do sell festive merchandise (cards, calendars etc) and we will be asking people to make a donation in the name of a loved one in lieu of a gift.”*

Carla plans to do this by

*“Sharing impact stories, re-sharing some of the years highlights and thanking supporters for their support this year. We will also promote our seasonal merchandise.”*

Why? Because according to Carla,

*“Group posts are more likely to feature in the News Feed. Our groups are our most engaged audience on Facebook and I want to keep them engaged so I can activate them to take part in an event or challenge next year and fundraise for us or support us again in other ways.”*

Carla’s team also plans to showcase “ways people can support us this christmas —i.e. purchasing a calendar or donating in lieu of a gift.”

*“Your page is a wonderful platform for testing content that you may later build into an ad campaign. I can delete a post that isn’t getting the response I intended or if for example an impact story is getting a good response I can add a ‘Donate’ button and people can support us by making a donation in seconds without having to leave the Facebook app.”*

*“It’s always good practice to keep your page audience engaged but I do tend to try and opt for quality over quantity when it comes to page posts,”*

Carla summarizes.

## 04

### Make use of the “donate” button

Nick Burne has helped develop digital fundraising strategies which have generated well over \$1 billion in online donations with brands like UNICEF, International Rescue Committee and Greenpeace.

He started GivePanel in 2019, a new platform that helps nonprofits manage their Facebook Fundraising.

Nick thinks one of the simplest ways to boost donations on your Facebook Page is to make use of the convenience that comes with the donate button.



*“People get a ton of direct mail, email, TV ads and online advertising at Christmas about giving. No wonder because it is a time of year that people feel warmer and more generous.”*

*“I firmly believe the key thing that stops most of them is convenience. If they knew they could donate in 1 click (just like how they buy their Christmas shopping on Amazon), they would do it,”*

Nick says.

*“This is where Facebook Donate comes in. Yes, you don’t get contact details. But you DO get a higher conversion rate; 13 times higher according to one test Facebook did with a nonprofit.”*

In fact, it takes just two taps to donate through a Facebook fundraiser. That’s much easier than clicking off to another website and waiting for the page to load, right?

That’s why Nick recommends asking yourself:

*“Is it really worth sacrificing 13 times more donors on the altar of contact data, especially in a post GDPR world?”*

*“In a 2019 [Charity Benchmarks](#) Study, the average percentage of supporters contactable by email in 2019 was 23%. This means the “real” opt-in rate for your online donation form compared to Facebook is actually more like 1.8%.”*

66

*"(And in a weird turn around, your opt-in rate on Facebook donate for a direct donation Christmas appeal could be higher than 1.8% anyway.)"*

*"We are so trained in getting contact details. But in 2020 I would rather see our nonprofit clients getting more of their community to give and finding new ways of stewarding them that don't involve an email or thank you letter in the post,"*

Nick continues.

66

*"How about, for example an amazing end of year thank you video pushed out on your Facebook Page and boosted to all your followers? For me, that's probably your most important piece of content all year."*

In fact, Nick mentions that [UNICEF](#) used this strategy in 2017 and got 5 times more donations when they thanked people with a message of hope, rather than their usual appeal based on "need".

Adrian O'Flynn is Creative Director at [Get Your Stories Straight](#), an agency based in Dublin which helps charities raise more money on Facebook.

He explains that these "donate" buttons are crucial because just 1% – 2% of your warm Facebook followers will convert on your website:

66

*"This is the depressing reality. This is the reason why you probably didn't bother using your Christmas appeal on Facebook last year."*

*"People really don't want to leave a social media app, where their friends are, and head over to their Chrome browser and wait for some static charity web page to load."*

*"Recently I clicked 'Donate now' on a major charity's Facebook post when I only had two bars of reception on my Samsung. It took 26 seconds for the donation form to load... that's an eternity."*

*"So, depending on how easy your donation form is to fill out, a mere 1% to 2% of people who read your Christmas Appeal on Facebook and click Donate Now will actually donate."*

*"But if you ask the same people to donate within Facebook, 10% to 20% will donate."*

05

## 5. Use social proof to drive "donate" button clicks

Now we know that the "donate" button is key to getting more donations because of its convenience, how can you drive people to that button?

Jean O'Brien is a digital consultant and designer from Dublin, who specialises in digital strategy and campaigns for nonprofits. She's also the founder of [Digital Charity Lab](#), a social enterprise that builds digital skills in non-profits and causes.

Jean recommends to



66

*"try out a fundraising appeal directly on Facebook, using the Facebook donate button on a post with an emotive story."*

*"It's a really good time to do this, and you don't need to be bound to the usual Christmas schedule. This isn't like a direct mail that has to be finalised and posted in November; people are online during the holidays and you can do this close to Christmas."*

Chances are, you're already using this button on your charity's Facebook Page. To get more people clicking the button, Jean recommends tying in social proof—evidence that other people have done so already.

*"Social proof is really important with Facebook donations: it's much better to get a decent amount of donations on one post than to have a scattering of tiny amounts on multiple posts. What kind of message does it send to your audience if they see you constantly asking for money and hardly anyone responding? A bad message, that's what."*

Social proof can take many forms, including:

- Quotes from previous donors
- How many people have donated already
- How much you've already raised
- Influencers or celebrities involved in the campaign

The average consumer reads [10 customer reviews](#) before making a purchase decision. Including these forms of social proof could combat that, and convince them to donate there and then.

Jean adds:

*"You will really help your chances of building an engaged audience and converting them to donors if you stop doing certain types of posts and focus on stories instead."*

*"If you're using Facebook as a bulletin board and posting job ads, news articles, corporate thanks and local events: stop that for December and move those stories to other channels. They're much better suited to LinkedIn or Twitter anyway. Focus on impact stories and case studies during December. And then continue this approach in the new year too!"*

Sabine Wagner-Schäfer agrees, and adds that nonprofits

*"should not work with general statements, but with clear donation examples."*  
*"A user who makes a donation wants to know exactly what can be achieved with his or her donation. So provide them with examples and always answer their questions in the comments – iteration is a key success factor!"*

## 06

### Run virtual challenges on Facebook

[Sabine Wagner-Schäfer](#) was the Head of Fundraising and member of the executive board at UNICEF in Germany. Now, she's a senior marketing consultant to Bertelsmann Group at AZ fundraising services GmbH.

Sabine recommends running virtual challenges to raise donations during the holiday season:



*"The virtual challenges are similar to the Facebook fundraisers, but include an additional challenge to strengthen the personal involvement,"*

Sabine explains.

*"A user sets a goal for himself/herself and reports regularly how close he/she is to achieving the goal. For each milestone the user asks the community, i.e. friends, family or other people, to support him in achieving the goal."*

*"These are not only fun for the community, but can also have a powerful impact."*

According to Sabine,

*"it is important for a non-governmental organisation (NGO) to be creative and think about an engaging challenge, so that many fans and other users are willing to participate. Any NGO should definitely try this feature!"*

## 07

### Use Facebook Rooms for festive fundraising livestreams

Nikki Bell, co-founder of the virtual event and project management platform [Fundraising Everywhere](#), recommends using Facebook's Rooms feature.

It's a relatively new feature that allows up to 50 people to live chat within Facebook.

Nikki explains:



*"We're hosting some exciting events on Fundraising Everywhere & Everywhere+ at Christmas and are really excited that charities are still seeing a rise in engagement and fundraising for live-streamed events."*

*"If you have the confidence to live stream yourself, definitely make use of Facebook's Rooms feature to continue your festive fundraising."*

*"One idea we've created is a virtual Santa's Grotto; book your Santa, set up the stream (in his grotto, of course) and use Facebook's Rooms managing tools to allow one family in at a time to have their chance to share their Christmas wishes."*

*"You can fundraise by featuring a donate button on your promotion or by taking advantage of Facebook's new pay for access feature (or both!)"*

Paul de Gregorio is the founder of [Rally](#), who work with organisations fighting for a safer, healthier, greener, more equal world. He agrees with the use of Facebook Live for charities:



*"I'd love to see charities run a series of Facebook Live events over the holiday season and into the new year. Because let's be honest, 2020 has been quite a year."*

*"What better time to put some effort into bringing together people from all parts of your organisation to tell your supporters exactly what they mean to you, how your year has gone, the plans you have for 2021 and how your supporters can help deliver the things that you and they want?"*

*"Get the CEO involved, ring your celebrity supporters and ask them for a message, bring your front line staff to the fore, make it fun, make it serious and make it authentic,"*

Paul adds.



## 08

**Schedule Instagram Live broadcasts**

We've just touched on the fact that live videos are a superb way to get potential donors engaged. But Instagram forms part of the suite of products that Facebook controls. (It's why you can control your Instagram page within your main Facebook dashboard.)

It's not just generic Instagram posts that [Julia Campbell](#), who was recently named by [Forbes](#) as a nonprofit thought leader you need to follow, recommends.

She recommends reaching the 1 billion monthly active users by harnessing Live videos:



*"Instagram offers a variety of donation tools that nonprofits can use to reach a younger audience at year-end (and beyond)."*

*"If you are currently active on Instagram, schedule weekly Instagram live broadcasts with updates on your campaign progress, inspiring stories from throughout the year, and an inside look at what's in store for the new year."*

*"During the live broadcast, make sure to give people shout-outs by name when they join or comment, and encourage people who donate to use the special I Donated sticker to celebrate giving on Instagram."*

Julia continues:



*"Be sure to save the live broadcast and share it to your IGTV account, and download the file to upload to YouTube or other social media sites, embed on your blog and website, and send out the link in an email campaign."*

*"Facebook says that Instagram Live usage is up over [70 percent](#) in the US this year, so capitalize on this trend!"*

## 09

**Run Facebook fundraising ads**

There's no doubt that Facebook Ads are a superb way to reach donors—even if you have a small fundraising budget.

[Ashley Hunter](#), Marketing Director at the Prostate Cancer Foundation, says:



*"During this holiday season, we'll be launching a series of organic and paid Facebook ads to help increase visibility around our organization and encourage more people to give on and off of the platform."*

*"We'll be posting organically to our Facebook page (then boosting to our Facebook page audience), and launching separate paid ads to drive donations and Facebook fundraisers. And as we get closer to Giving Tuesday, we'll run additional paid ads with our donation match messaging."*

In fact, Facebook advertising was recommended by many of our holiday fundraising campaign experts. Below is the advice they shared for running successful campaigns.

## 10

**Create urgency in your ads**

Wendy Ahl, UK Operations Director at [Safe Haven for Donkeys](#) explains:



*"We have been using the Facebook fundraising tools for 3 years now and have found that a mixture of Facebook ads, using the Facebook donate button and fundraisers works well for us."*

*"With fundraisers, we find a need that is specific, timely and urgent works best. For example, we are a donkey charity and earlier this year, our sanctuary in Israel was damaged by high winds."*

*We set up a fundraiser to pay for the repairs and had raised the whole amount in a few hours. We will be going ahead with a new project at the end of the year so plan to set up a fundraiser to raise the start-up costs. Facebook ads work really well with our "adopt a donkey" scheme so we plan to use these to encourage more people to adopt a donkey as a Christmas gift."*

*"Of course, the donate button is on our Facebook page and we also attach this to many of the posts on our page," Wendy continues.*

*"We have found that when Facebook users are at home, they spend much more time browsing Facebook and every holiday season, we see an uplift in donations as a result."*

**Create lookalike audiences based on previous donors**

Ben Matthews is the co-founder of [Empower](#), a digital marketing agency for charities, nonprofits and purpose-led brands, whose clients include UNICEF, UN Refugee Agency, Amnesty International, The Jo Cox Foundation.

Ben thinks:



*"Facebook has been saying for a while now that their algorithm is better at finding the best supporters and donors for your cause than you are. What this means for Facebook Ads is that you need to trust their algorithm."*

*He recommends using the Lookalike audience within Facebook Ads. It works by uploading a list of people who've already donated. Facebook's algorithm will find other users with similar traits: "If you have a lookalike audience of 1%, broaden that out to 3%, 5% or even 7% and see if that brings you more results. Facebook's algorithm bets that it can."*

**Use the campaign budget optimisation feature**

Wondering how to make the most out of your budget?

*"Another way to take advantage of this is by using Facebook's campaign budget optimisation feature," says Ben Matthews.*

*"By turning this feature on, you are allowing Facebook to shift budget between ad sets automatically and then weight budget towards the ad sets that are driving the best results for your organisation."*

*"For example, you might have £500 split between 5 ad sets and each spend £100 equally. But by turning campaign budget optimisation on, Facebook's algorithm will weight budget towards the best performing ad set, so you might have one ad set that spends £400 and the rest spend just £25 between them. But that's ok, as you'll be driving the most results for the least cost and that's where the Facebook algorithm comes in to help you."*

Ben summarizes:

*“As always, we recommend that you test each of these points to see what works best for your organisation. But we see time and again in the organisations that we work with, that the answer is in the algorithm.”*



### Do you find Facebook fundraising confusing?

With GivePanel, you can monitor all of your Facebook donations through a simple, easy-to-navigate user interface. GivePanel will show you all your fundraisers, people who have added your donate button to a post, Instagram donations, and more, together with analytics so you can really see what is going on.

### Use automatic placements

[Emily Martin](#) began working at the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in 2008, launching its first ever multi-channel advertising campaign that has since grown into a comprehensive, digital-first, fundraising program with a focus on donor acquisition.

She's currently the Associate Director of Digital Marketing at the IRC with a focus on paid social, search and display, email and website marketing donor journeys.



*“For the last 5 years or so, Facebook has been a significant piece of our digital fundraising strategy, throughout the year but especially during Year End. We lean heavily on Facebook advertising and our Facebook Page to engage and build our audiences and ultimately drive our supporters to make a donation to the IRC.*

*“We utilize automated placements so that our ads show up across Facebook's platforms – inclusive of Instagram and Audience Network, and all devices – desktop and mobile,”*

Emily explains.

*“Additionally, this year we will be launching a Facebook fundraiser for Giving Tuesday in order to take advantage of the match that Facebook offers. To push our fundraiser out further, we will engage with our recent Facebook fundraisers who may have come in originally as a result of COVID or the explosion in Beirut to see if they can*

*either promote our Fundraiser to their friends, or launch their own IRC fundraiser during this period."*

*Emily adds: "This gives them another way to engage with the IRC in the manner they prefer, instead of driving them off channel which would be harder to do and more expensive."*

### Get professional Facebook Ads training

It's tempting to run your own Facebook Ads in-house. You can't afford the help of consultants or agencies because that eats into your costs, right?

However, Jean O'Brien, founder of [Digital Charity Lab](#), says:



*"I would really, really strongly recommend you do at the end of this year is: find and book some training in Facebook Ads for early 2021."*

*"The Facebook Ad platform is exceptionally effective and can deliver incredible value for charities. But so many charities are not using it: they're just boosting posts with small spends, which doesn't result in any real return."*

*"It can't be denied that the Facebook Ads system is quite complex, and there are strategic techniques that need to be learned to make ads really perform,"*

Jean continues.

*"Your team needs proper training in it to use it well, and it's a hugely worthwhile investment. If you can run your own in-house acquisition campaigns, and don't have to use agencies, it will reduce your costs significantly."*

*"Getting a good grasp on Facebook Ads will allow you to promote birthday fundraisers, run direct donation campaigns, and build your lists, all in a very cost-effective way."*

*Summarizing, Jean says: "If you're concerned about capacity: review your priorities. Spend less time on organic Facebook posts and more time on ads and the fundraising tools."*

### Replicate a traditional sales funnel

eCommerce experts replicate a buyer's journey when encouraging people to buy products. By knowing what makes them tick, and what pushes them to hit "purchase", helps them nudge potential customers in that direction.

Sabine Wagner-Schäfer looks at the entire sales funnel when running ad campaigns to attract donors. She recommends looking at the journey a person has before they donate to your charity.

This is usually broken down into four main stages:

1. **Awareness:** they're seeing your charity for the first time
2. **Consideration:** they need more information to get them thinking about donating
3. **Conversion:** they need one final push to make a donation
4. **Loyalty:** they set-up repeat donations (like £10 a month)

Sabine explains:



*"Use the funnel strategy in paid advertisements on Facebook to place your own donation calls in a targeted manner (Awareness, Consideration, Conversion)."*

*“Through photos, videos or live streams from the site, you provide insights into fundraising activities so that users get a better idea of what your fundraising campaign is really about.”*

The easiest way to do this is by defining your target person at each stage. Someone in the awareness stage, for example, might not already know about your charity—so it makes sense to exclude people who’ve already liked your nonprofit’s Facebook page.

But people deciding whether to donate already like and engage with your page. You can target those people specifically with more salesy messages since they’re likely tossing up whether to donate. The job of your advert is to encourage them to donate there and then.

## 11

## Run an email supporter journey to coincide with your Facebook fundraising

Granted, you’re reading this because you want to boost the donations your charity gets through its Facebook Page.

But Jill O’Herlihy, Head of Customer Happiness at [GivePanel](#), recommends an omnichannel approach similar to the sales funnel we just mentioned. Only Jill thinks you should be using email alongside your Facebook fundraising thank you posts to communicate with donors—starting with your thank you message you’re posting on your supporters Facebook Fundraising page.

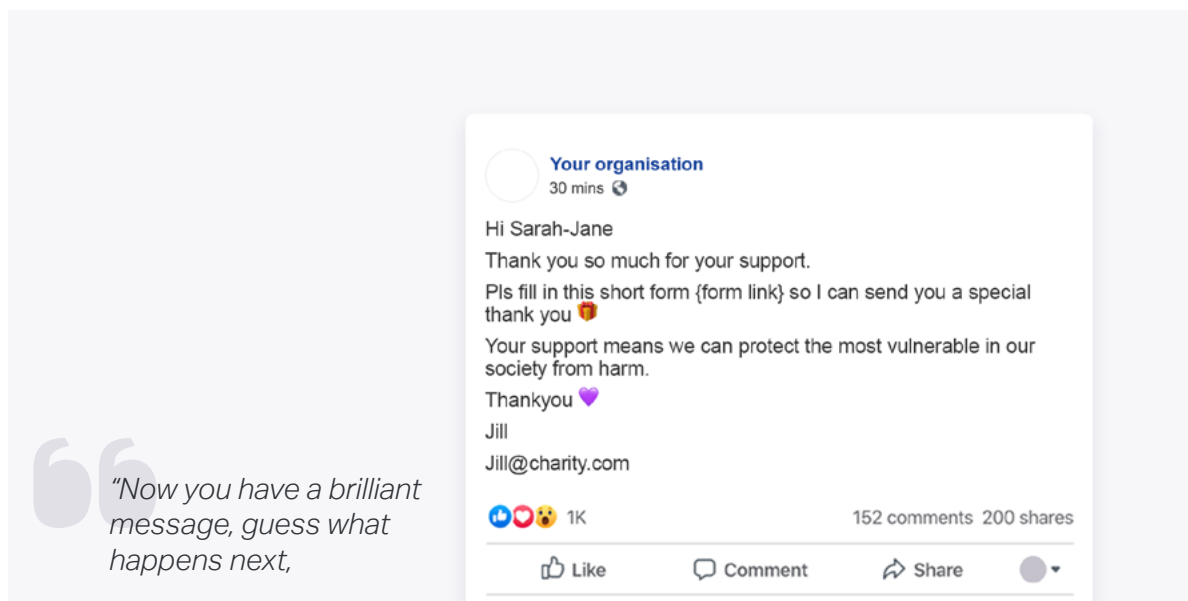


*“First things first, you need to make sure your messaging is on point to deliver the optimum conversions and opt in rates.”*

Jill explains seven quick tips to do this:

1. **“Personalise it:** *make sure you are using the fundraisers name and sign it from you.*
2. **Make it snappy:** *there isn’t a whole lot of real estate for long flowing thank yous in Facebook.*
3. **Incentivise them:** *offer them something in return for their contact details—a physical or digital gift, and add some mystery to it rather than telling them what you’re sending.*
4. **Get their deets:** *use a form to get their details, remember two things - include an opt in and keep it high up in the message... remember, not a lot of real estate here.*
5. **Excite them:** *use emojis where you can. Hearts in your brand colour work a treat.*
6. **Remember where you are:** *you’re on Facebook so the language can be relaxed.*
7. **No images:** *I know, it’s weird, but images don’t work here.. Don’t distract them from filling in that form!”*

So, what does that look like in action? Jill shares an example of a thank you message you can post on your Facebook fundraisers pages:



*“Now you have a brilliant message, guess what happens next,*

Jill continues.

*“Supporters will start filling in your form and up to 60% may opt in to further marketing. This is where you need to act fast and here is my tip to get the most out of your facebook fundraising this holiday season.”*

*“Each day, grab your opt-ins and add them to an email journey - hit them with emails while their fundraiser is still live on facebook; supporting and encouraging them to raise more.”*

Jill shares what this journey could look like:

- **Day 1:** Thank you / Invite your friends to donate / thank your donors
- **Day 4:** Impact story such as “£100 means we can...”. Share this on your fundraising page.
- **Day 7:** Share your #supporterselfie with your donors on your fundraising page.
- **Day 9:** Another thank you with a second impact story on the bigger picture”

Finally, Jill adds:

*“I don’t know if any nonprofit is doing this yet, but I think it would be a really interesting test to see if it delivered an uplift in the number of donations, the amount raised and also, if it converted a Facebook fundraiser into a lifelong supporter. Worth a try!”*

## There we have it!

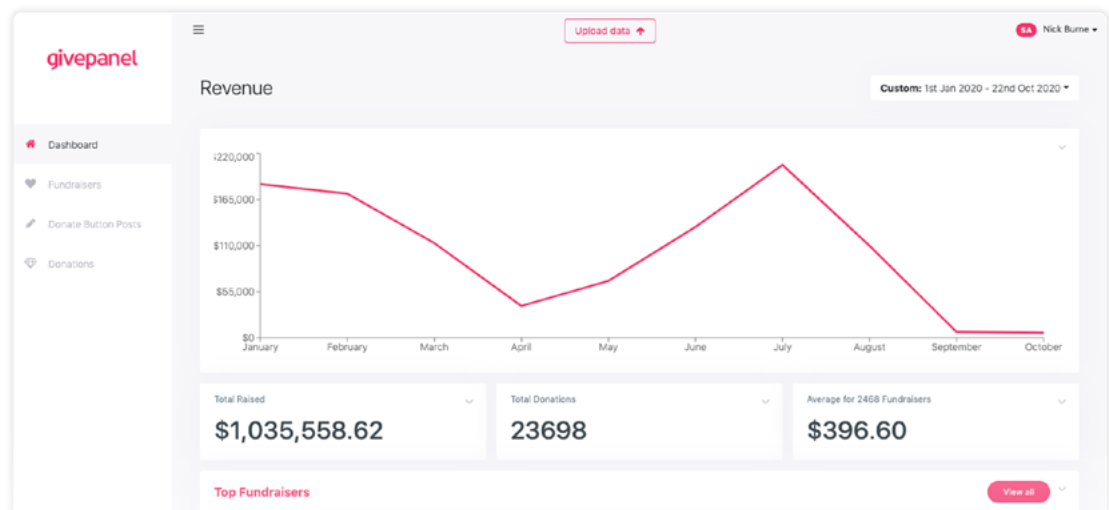
As you can see, there are tons of ways your nonprofit can use Facebook for fundraising throughout the holiday season.

The trick is to make use of fundraisers, and drive people to your donate button—be that through ads, organic posts, or live streams.

The only thing left to do is to put these techniques into action. Grab yourself a tool like GivePanel to manage your Facebook fundraisers, and put some time into crafting social media posts that encourage people to donate via Facebook.

**You'll soon notice that this season is prime time for giving.**





## About GivePanel

GivePanel are the experts in Facebook’s Giving Tools. We are on the cutting edge of Facebook fundraising to help our charity clients capitalize on this new channel, using our intuitive platform, strategic guidance and implementation support.

Over 160 nonprofits in 10 countries trust GivePanel help them manage their Facebook Fundraising.

We are constantly innovating and developing the technology further for our charity clients based on the needs and feedback we are receiving and new Facebook opportunities we are exploring.

If you would like to know more about the GivePanel platform please [book a demo](#) with our team.

[Book a free demo](#)

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