

Donor Relations: How to Build Better, Stronger Connections

 salsalabs.com/blog/donor-relations-guide



Figuring out the right way to connect with your supporters is a challenge that nonprofits of all shapes and sizes face.

Whether it's planning effective stewardship strategies or extending relevant engagement opportunities, mastering donor relations should always be a top priority for nonprofits like yours.

It's important that all of your donors, from your first-time givers to your recurring major donors, feel like they have a personal relationship with your cause.

That being said, nonprofits rarely have the time or resources to assign staff to individually manage donor relationships at such a small scale. **Rather, smart nonprofits leverage robust donor management technology to see these partnerships run smoothly.**

Excited to find out how donor management software can revolutionize your relationships with supporters? Check out our top tech-powered donor relations strategies. Your team should:

Managing meaningful relationships with donors doesn't have to be out of reach. Let's dive into these effective approaches to donor relations so your team can start building stronger connections.

01

Streamline donor relations by investing in a nonprofit CRM



1. Streamline donor relations by investing in a nonprofit CRM.

It used to be that your nonprofit's donor relations strategy was shaped significantly by your organization's budget and manpower.

Smaller and even midsize nonprofits were often limited by their size and budget.

Without the resources to dedicate enough personnel to managing donor relations, many potential relationships fell by the wayside.

Even worse, without any way to streamline the donor relations process, there was little consistency in how teams interacted with constituents. Some supporters may have gotten more attention, others may have been stewarded more effectively, while others were unintentionally overlooked.

Without dedicated donor relations software in place, nonprofits often found themselves unable to effectively connect with supporters or implement a coherent donor relations strategy.

Luckily, with advancements in donor management tech, there are so many new ways your nonprofit can streamline donor relations without having to break your budget or overextend your staff.

Specifically, nonprofit CRMs make it so much easier to form strong supporter bonds.

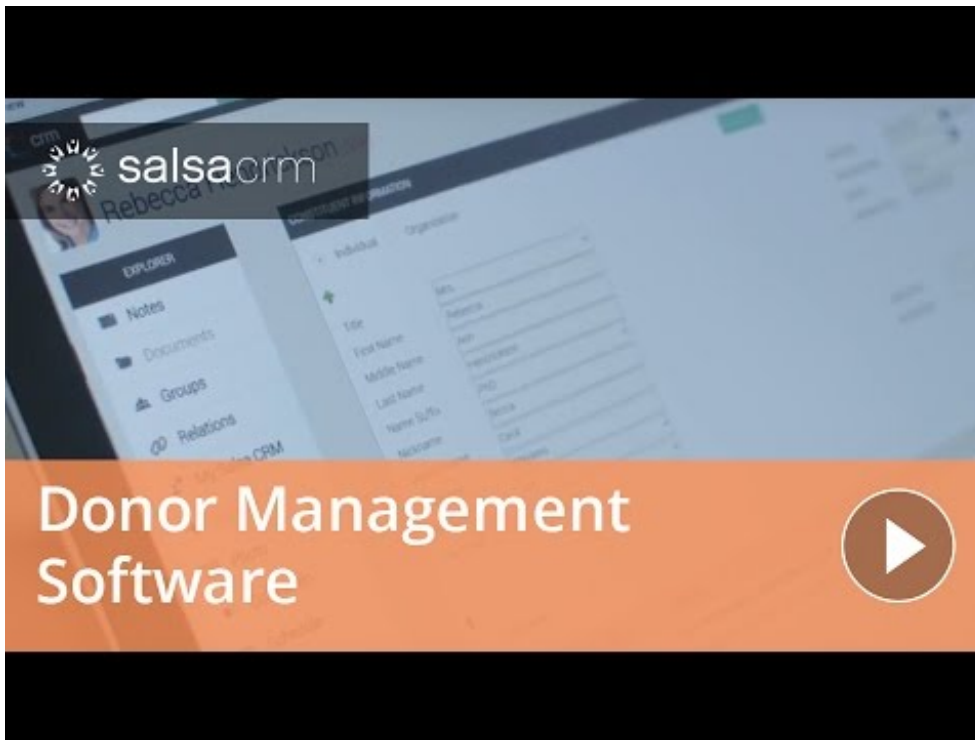
In the nonprofit world, CRM stands for constituent relationship management software. This refers to any kind of donor database with tools to help automate your donor relations efforts, including managing individual relationships, engaging with supporters, and other key tasks.

Check out Salsa CRM, a robust donor database for growing organizations like yours. With this platform, your team can:

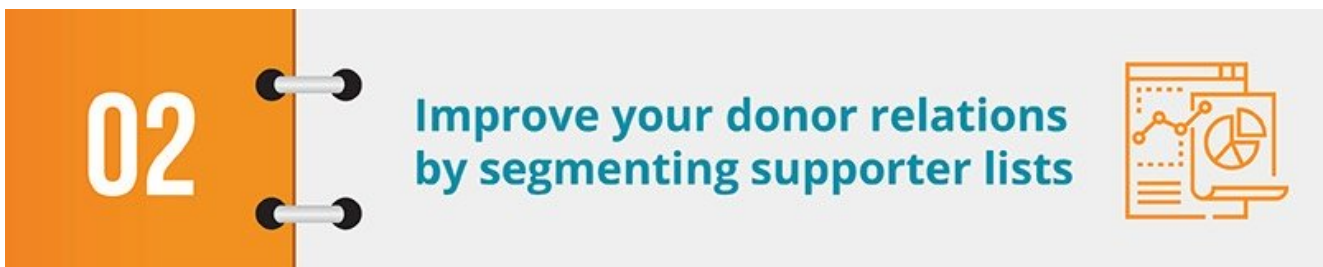
- **Build rich donor profiles** to learn more about your individual supporters.
- **Track the giving history** of your donors to better manage fundraising.
- **Create segmented donor lists** to more effectively plan your stewardship and solicitation strategies.

- **Automate your digital marketing** outreach for email, social media, and other online channels.
- **Share customizable forms**, like giving forms, event pages, and online petitions.

And much, much more! Excited to find out how Salsa CRM can improve your donor relations efforts? *Take a look at this video to see all that this powerful software can offer.*



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/4M8bnNAwbQ4>



2. Improve your donor relations by segmenting supporter lists.

Once your team has a fully-loaded nonprofit CRM in place, one of the most effective donor relations tools you'll have at your disposal is list segmentation.

Segmentation refers to the process of creating groups of similar supporters and then implementing tailored donor relations strategies with those groups.

Your nonprofit might segment supporters by:

- **Biographical markers** like their age, gender, or ethnicity.

- **Regional markers** such as what country, state, or city they live in.
- **Professional markers** including their employer or industry.
- **Philanthropic markers** that relate to their history as a donor to your cause or others.
- **Engagement markers** that indicate how a supporter engages with your nonprofit.

Segmenting your supporter lists can make a major difference in how your nonprofit approaches donor relations.

Instead of simply attempting to make a one-size-fits-all constituent management approach work for your entire community, you can craft unique strategies for distinct segments.

Even better, your team can track trends across your supporter segments to determine which strategies work with which groups, and identify when your team needs to reevaluate your approach for certain cohorts.

For example, you might implement unique events strategies for first-time young professional donors than you would for long-time donors who are close to retirement age. Or, you could tailor your advocacy campaigns to address the interests of female donors between the ages of 35 and 40.

The bottom line? It's not enough to simply collect donor information in your nonprofit's CRM. Rather, to make stronger connections with your supporters you'll need to leverage segmentation to more effectively track and manage your different constituent groups.



3. Track donations to better plan donor relations activities.

Since the advent of fundraising, one of the recurring challenges faced by nonprofits has been staying on top of an individual's giving history with your cause.

As we touched on earlier, an individual's donor status can (and should) make a big difference in how you relate to that individual.

If your supporters feel like their contributions aren't meaningful to your cause, then they'll be less inclined to give again in the future.

Alternatively, when you show donors that their support makes a huge impact on your mission, they may be inspired to give even more down the line.

With this in mind, it's time to consider how donation tracking tools can help your nonprofit better manage donor relations.

Donation tracking refers to CRM features that empower your team to process, track, and acknowledge gifts from all of your donors. Here's how the process works:

- **When a donor gives, their gift is tracked in your system**, including key information like the amount donated, the campaign that the gift is associated with, how your team appealed to the donor, and the date the gift was received.
- **Whether it's the first or fiftieth time a donor has contributed, their donation history will be stored in your CRM.** This way, your team can easily review an individual's giving track record and make determinations about what donor relations strategies are appropriate.

After a donor has given, your team can use your CRM's automation software to generate personalized thank-you messages and gift acknowledgments. This way, your supporters will *always* be shown timely appreciation for their contributions.

Donation tracking can play a crucial role in your donor relations strategy because these tools help your team manage the giving side of your relationships with supporters.

While stewardship and engagement are important, being able to effectively manage your fundraising relationships should be at the heart of your donor relations efforts.



04

Customize your CRM's dashboard to track donor relations metrics



4. Customize your CRM's dashboard to track donor relations metrics.

Your nonprofit's CRM can prove a powerful donor relations asset when it comes to tracking fundraising and engagement metrics.

When your team chooses a customizable nonprofit CRM solution, there's no limit to the metrics you can measure to better understand the performance of your team and the behaviors of your constituency.

Even better, the best nonprofit CRMs allow users to customize the main dashboard of their donor management system. On this central screen, your team can view your progress toward overall fundraising goals, event registration rates, returning donor percentages, and more.

This means that your nonprofit's donor relations efforts will always be front of mind when you log in.

Part of the difficulty in mastering donor relations is that it can be easy to fall off course. For example, if your team fails to automate gift acknowledgements, you risk alienating key donors you'll need to reach your fundraising benchmarks.

By choosing a nonprofit CRM that helps keep your team focused on all of the smaller donor relations goals that work together to form your core objectives, it'll be *even easier* for your nonprofit to stay on track.

05

Use your donor management system to master nonprofit communications



5. Use your donor management system to master nonprofit communications.

Finally, let's talk about one of the most effective ways you can leverage CRM technology to impact your donor relations efforts: communication software.

While many nonprofit organizations have a CRM solution and use communications software, these systems aren't always integrated.

This means that when your team wants to send out emails, draft direct mail messages, or otherwise plan your communication efforts, you have to manually transfer or input data that's housed in your CRM. This process can be labor-intensive as well as inefficient.

However, if your team chooses a donor management platform that also offers communication tools, you'll never have to worry about moving from system to system!

With a fully integrated CRM and communication solution, your team can:

- **Conduct mail merges** and flow supporter data into relevant fields on email, direct mail, and [social media templates](#).
- **Draft, schedule, and publish messages** to your supporters, as well as send them out to specific segment lists.
- **Track marketing metrics** like open rates, impressions, conversion rates, bounce rates, and more to determine the success of your strategy.

So much of effective donor relations relates back to effective communications. Without robust communication software and donor management solutions, your nonprofit could be left struggling to effectively connect with supporters.

Managing your donor relations doesn't have to be an uphill climb. With these smart, CRM-powered strategies, your team will be ready to take on the challenge!

If you want to unlock more supporter management and fundraising tips, check out these additional resources:

Request a Personalized Demo of the NEW Salsa CRM

Boost staff efficiency, deepen supporter relationships, and accelerate fundraising growth with Salsa CRM. See it in action!

[REQUEST A SALSA CRM DEMO >](#)

The screenshot displays the Salsa CRM interface for a user named Darwin Whaley. The interface includes a navigation menu on the left with options like Notes, Documents, Groups, Relations, My Salsa CRM, Photo, Cultivation, Schedule, Services, Forms, and Donations. The main content area shows the 'DONOR INFORMATION' section for Darwin Whaley, with tabs for General, Honors/Memorials, Notes, and Donations Profile. Below the tabs, there are two tables. The first table lists donor activities with columns for Date, Author, Purpose, and Type. The second table lists donations with columns for Date, List As Name, Amount, Type, and Payment.

Date	Author	Purpose	Type
7/2/15	APa	Gala Prep	Sp
6/28/15	APa	General	Ta
6/13/15	APa	Phone call	Fi

Date	List As Name	Amount	Type	Payment
6/13/15	Mr Darwin T Whaley	\$11.00	Recurring Payment	Visa
6/13/15	Mr Darwin T Whaley	\$11.00	Recurring	\$11.0