

A/B Testing Made Easy – Nonprofits

If you're serious about improving your nonprofit's response rates, there's one simple tool you shouldn't neglect: A/B testing.

If you're with a nonprofit, you don't have hours of time to waste on poor A/B tests that don't improve your bottom line. **Here's what you need to know.**



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DEFINITION

An A/B Test is a way to figure out what your most powerful appeal is. In an A/B test, you compare two things that are almost the same—except for one important element.

FOR EXAMPLE, HERE IS HOW YOU CAN A/B TEST:

1. Write a fundraising email or appeal letter.



2. Change one thing – now you have 2 versions.



3. Cut your list into half, so it's 2 lists. Send one version to each list.



4. Measure the results & use what had a better response in the future.



The most important law of testing: don't assume anything!

Resource: nonprofitHub.org

With a simple test, you can easily figure out what messages your audience most connects to. Testing is essential, because no audience is the same.

WHAT ARE THE BEST ELEMENTS FOR YOUR NONPROFIT TO A/B TEST?

HERE ARE SOME A/B TESTS THAT ARE MOST EFFECTIVE FOR NONPROFITS:

STORY TESTING: Is it better to appeal to donors with a success or sob story? In other words, is it better to focus on your success or the need for support?

CALL TO ACTION: Is it more effective to appeal for your donor's time or money? Test two alternatives to see which results in a better response.

DESIGN: Are you thinking about freshening up your look or adding pictures? Test two designs to see which response is greater. When mailing, A/B testing of the envelope color, size, shape, paper quality, or design can be very important.

FROM LINE: If your nonprofit has a charismatic founder who is active in the organization, the 'From Line' should always be from that founder. If there is no single big name, then the person in the 'From Line' should be A/B tested.

PERSONALIZATION: Informality is usually the best rule of thumb for nonprofit campaigns, because the goal is to create a personal connection.

OFFER TESTING: Many nonprofits give a wide variety of free gifts in return for donations. You might consider offering a choice of different types of gifts to see which appeals to your donor base.

TITLES OR SUBJECT LINES: Do shorter titles work better? Question titles vs. statement titles? Are negative titles or positive titles more effective? Spend time making them more effective.