

## CASE STUDY

# Fundraising in the Time of COVID: Good news in challenging times.

BDI clients saw online revenue increase by 96%!\*



## THE CHALLENGE

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to predict how fundraising would proceed. It was uncharted territory for not just BDI, but the entire fundraising industry.

- *Would donors see Rescue Missions as essential services and give generously?*
- *Or turn to other causes instead?*
- *Or might they not have the financial means to give at all?*

We knew we had to respond with clear vision, responsive campaign strategies, and top-notch creative execution and production. During this uncertain time, BDI kept three goals top of mind:

1. Stay the course and remain focused.
2. Retain existing donors and upgrade their support.
3. Acquire new donors and reactivate lapsed supporters.

## THE SOLUTION

BDI's team took immediate action.

- **Called an Agency Taskforce** to address rapid response strategies, actively monitor breaking news and continually refine our marketing and communications strategies.
- **Re-engineered integrated campaign components** in both direct mail and digital channels to speak to emerging challenges related to the pandemic.
- **Created customized campaigns** that featured compelling human-interest stories and informed donors of the unique challenges and community needs experienced by our Missions clients.
- **Built a COVID Emergency Response Strategy, PR & Media Kit** – available via our client portal – that included strategic one-sheets, press releases, telephone scripts, thank-you text, social media posts, and memes for in-house implementation.

## THE RESULTS

Throughout 2020, without exception, our Rescue Mission clients experienced unprecedented YOY results:

- 37% increase in overall cultivation revenue, 23% increase in response rate & 12% increase in average gift.<sup>†</sup>
- 101% increase in total acquisition revenue and 76% lift in response rate – resulting in a 68% reduction to the net cost per donor acquired.
- 99% increase in email revenue.<sup>§</sup>
- 60% increase in the ROI for Facebook ads – from 2.92 to 4.68.
- 152% increase to online revenue for Giving Tuesday.

But this was only the beginning. Our team of insightful strategists and thought leaders continue to monitor the fundraising environment and adapt our campaigns. Read more on the back...

\* This figure represents the average increase in one-time online revenue for BDI's clients during January-December 2020.

† This statistic represents the difference year over year (YOY) during March-December 2020.

§ All digital statistics represent the difference year over year (YOY) during January-December 2020.

# More of the story...

## Stay Calm and Check the Mail

When COVID struck, donors became acutely aware that more of their neighbors were struggling with unemployment, poverty and homelessness. That awareness led to people's hearts – and checkbooks – opening with compassion and generosity.

Though cost-effective direct mail has an inherently long lead time, BDI immediately went into action in March 2020 – creating print-on-demand insert art and copy for clients to add to their receipts and gift acknowledgements.

Our Strategists and Creative team drafted custom copy for our clients to highlight the impact of the pandemic in their Mission and respective communities as early as the mid-April direct mail appeals. We also created COVID-alert inserts for their early summer newsletters to address the increased need.

COVID-specific customizations continued throughout the year – meeting each Mission's preferences regarding cadence, messaging and their community's unique challenges.



*"COVID-19 created new challenges and opportunities to reach out to donors and engage with them. BDI's ability to pivot quickly and adapt our creative and execution strategies during this time allowed our Rescue Mission clients to address their own community's unique needs and give their supporters an opportunity to be part of the solution. It was truly beautiful to see the generosity that was released from online donors in 2020!"*

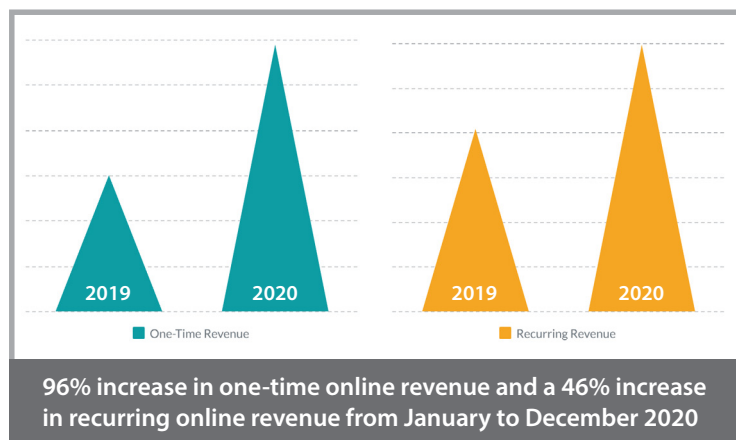
Stephanie Tippitt  
VP, Digital Strategy & Optimization



## Digital Explosion in the Age of COVID

With many people following stay-at-home orders, reaching people online became more effective – and more important – than ever.

By mid-March, clients were already approving COVID creative. We began addressing the pandemic with copy in our March eNewsletter, which deployed on March 27, 2020, and continued with every digital campaign moving forward through year-end and into 2021.



To reach current supporters and engage new online donors, BDI reimagined our annual digital communications plans. We then built a series of new custom emails addressing the pandemic, as well as organic social media assets, Facebook ads, display ads, custom donation pages and homepage lightboxes.

We also jumped at leveraging Giving Tuesday Now (May 5, 2020) – a special, national giving opportunity – by developing a suite of cross-channel digital assets for our participating clients.



If your Rescue Mission has not experienced these results or you'd like to learn more about how BDI can help you move beyond what you thought was possible, please contact Kevin today.

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