



When Donors Stop Answering Their Phones

An explosion of technology options offer fundraisers innovative and efficient channels for donor communications. However, the phone call still arguably plays the most vital role in connecting with potential donors. When it comes to discussing timely, consequential, or complex issues research shows that a trusted phone call¹ is more effective among the generations² most likely to give.

However, two issues challenge fundraisers in their attempt to better communicate with donors. First, it is increasingly more difficult to properly contact the donor, because donor information is constantly changing. Every year, 37% of Americans change their name, home address, or phone number, and an estimated 5%–15% of typical donor files can become out-of-sync in a single month.³ Unless changes in donor records are pushed to fundraiser databases in near real-time, the inaccuracies mount incredibly quickly. How can a fundraiser using incorrect or incomplete information expect to connect with donors?

Second, donors no longer trust incoming calls due to the onslaught of unwanted robocalls, phone number spoofing, and fraud scams. In an effort to reduce the risk of phone scams, donors are often advised to ignore calls from unrecognized numbers. Of the more than 3.2 million reports of fraud the Federal Trade Commission received in 2019, phone calls were the most common way scammers contacted Americans.⁴ To help, phone carriers are now providing services to detect and flag “scam” and “fraudulent” calls. But legitimate fundraising calls are getting caught in the crossfire, incorrectly blocked, or tagged as spam. How can fundraisers ensure that they can reach donors when donors don’t trust the call?

Here are five steps fundraisers can take to keep the lines of donor communication open:

1. Keep donor contact information current

Fundraisers depend on their CRM for donor outreach; any gaps or outdated information not only means inefficiency, but also severe [TCPA compliance risk](#). With the very real monetary and brand risks that come from TCPA violations, updating CRM data in a monthly batch is not good enough. Instead, incorporate a sophisticated identity solution that relies on authoritative data sources and pushes any changes in donor records to the database in real-time. Neustar, a TransUnion company, continuously corroborates donor and device identity data against hundreds of authoritative data sources, and then pushes updates in records directly to client databases, enabling

organizations to keep CRM records fresh, complete, and accurate. Additionally, clients can provide one or more donor data points (e.g., phone number, address, email, consent date), and Neustar will append additional phone numbers to that record, including information on the phone type, in-service indicator, or risk associated for TCPA regulations. These insights allow outbound dialers to develop better dialing strategies, prioritizing the right numbers for maximum operational efficiency and donations per dial.

2. Know when, and what number to use, to contact donors

Keeping a CRM database up-to-date is only the first step. A donor’s record may feature an accurate landline number, but the donor may prefer to use their mobile phone. They may be far more likely to answer their phone in the morning than the evening, or during the weekend than during the week. Understanding predictive phone behavior per donor provides powerful insights that enhance outbound dialing strategies. Neustar helps fundraisers prioritize the most contactable donors by analyzing proxies on phone usage and then scoring those accounts according to their contactability.

Neustar also drills down into each individual account and prioritizes the various numbers within that account according to contactability, analyzing the quality of the numbers and reprioritizing them based on which ones are most likely to be answered. Finally, Neustar leverages its relationship with telecom providers to offer predictive phone behavior insights on the times of day and days

of the week when each donor is most likely to answer her phone.

3. Ensure calls aren’t blocked or spam-misabeled

In a recent survey, ACA International reported that 78% of respondents experience call-blocking and 74% have their calls mislabeled.⁵ Over a two-year period, the American Association of Public Opinion Research found an eightfold increase in call blocking.⁶

To prevent mistaken call blocking and spam-mislabeling, fundraisers must ensure that phone numbers used for outbound calling are included in an authoritative list of registered business numbers. As a verified organization, fundraisers should also add phone numbers used for inbound calling only – Do-Not-Originate (DNO) numbers – to authoritative blacklists. Neustar enables fundraisers to manage and assign caller names to all owned phone numbers, ensuring consistency across operators and mobile apps while mitigating inaccurate call blocking and mislabeling. This also helps prevent scammers and spoofer from using these numbers fraudulently, so that donors can better trust calls.

4. Tell donors who you are

A survey by Neustar⁷ found that over 88% of consumers report being more likely to answer a call if they can be certain who is calling. While caller name services provide a high level of accuracy for donor phone numbers and name information, the same can’t be said for fundraisers’ caller IDs. Fundraisers often have numerous outbound call numbers spread across multiple carriers, along with a high rate of business number changes

and rotations. When numbers are not registered and are not regularly maintained, the caller ID can appear in any number of problematic ways:

- Blank
- A phone number with no caller name (e.g., “Unavailable”)
- An incorrect caller name (e.g., showing as a different organization)
- An inconsistent caller name brand display (e.g., slight variations on the organization’s name)
- Labeled as “Number Unknown” or “SPAM Likely”

In all of these instances, donors are much less likely to trust and answer the call. By maintaining their phone lists and having a reliable caller ID program in place, fundraisers can ensure that when they make an outbound call, their caller ID will be accurate and consistent across any telecom carrier, no matter whether the donor uses a mobile or landline phone.

5. Tell donors why you are calling

When a donor trusts the caller and understands the purpose of the call, the donor is far more likely to answer. Due to advances in mobile caller ID, dialers can now represent themselves

more faithfully by displaying branded information as part of the caller ID, including the organization’s full name, business location, logos, e-business cards, social media links, and more.

Because Neustar manages over 90% of caller ID in the U.S., it can offer organizations the ability to brand the name and number displayed for outbound calls. Through a centralized online portal, dialers can ensure a consistent caller display over landline and mobile phones across over 850 voice service providers and caller ID apps.

The telephone is still a critical channel for communicating with donors. But if fewer donors are willing to pick up the phone, those important conversations can’t take place. With accurate donor data, predictive phone behavior insights on when and on what numbers donors prefer to use, and context-aware and consistent caller ID, fundraisers can improve contact rates and their chances of securing donations.

Why Neustar?

Neustar is the industry leader in consumer identity resolution. The Neustar OneID® system leverages

hundreds of authoritative data sources, continuously corroborating consumer and device identity with an exceptionally high degree of trust, in near real-time.

- Trusted by all of the top 10 U.S. banks and top 10 credit card issuers
- Unparalleled coverage of wireless, VoIP, and non-public phone numbers
- Unique insight into billions of call transactions
- Management of over 90% of the U.S. caller ID market, serving all major phone operators
- Precise linkages between a donor’s name, phone number and phone activity
- Donor data refreshed up to every 15 minutes

For more information, call **1-855-898-0036 x4**, email risk@team.neustar, or visit www.risk.neustar ■

1 www.home.neustar/blog/three-reasons-apps-wont-kill-contact-center

2 www.insidecharity.org/2018/07/04/fundraising-appeals/

3 www.home.neustar/resources/whitepapers/consumer-identity-omnichannel-marketing

4 www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/reports/consumer-sentinel-network-data-book-2019/consumer_sentinel_network_data_book_2019.pdf

5 www.acainternational.org/assets/advocacy-resource-center-description/call-blocking.pdf

6 www.aapor.org/Education-Resources/Reports/Spam-Flagging-and-Call-Blocking-and-Its-Impact-on.aspx

7 www.communications.neustar/blog/robocall-customer-connection-infographic