

# Asking Always Applies

Now that you understand the importance of linking digital giving to specific needs, it all comes down to how you ask for donations. In the giving world, we simply call this the “ask,” and *asking always applies*. We like to say that asking is asking, is asking, is asking - but assuming is not asking.

No matter how great your message is, you should never take for granted that congregants are going to give. If you’ve ever been fishing, you know all the preparation in the world means nothing if you don’t finish strong. By utilizing a direct and convincing “ask,” you’re making sure that your hard work pays off.

## What are You Trying to Achieve?

Your first step in this process should be identifying what it is you want to achieve. This is different from your overall goal. For instance, your goal may be to increase digital giving by 30 percent within four weeks. What you’re trying to achieve, however, is getting congregants to sign up and donate using DonorWERX Digital Giving Software.

What you’re hoping to achieve will dictate how you ask for donations. Your “ask” will consist of calls to action - also known as CTAs. A direct call to action is asking someone to take a specific step — such as making an immediate donation. This could be as simple as a “Donate Now” button at the top of your pages.

A transitional CTA, on the other hand, hopes to catch people that might not be ready to give. This will offer congregants an opportunity to do something rather than simply asking for money directly. Churches often do this by providing free downloads - such as guides on how to plan a budget - or by asking viewers to watch a video. This helps deepen the relationship and improve the likelihood of donations.

Regardless of the CTA you're using, make sure it focuses on what you're trying to achieve and aligns with your overall goals. For instance, if you could get your audience to do one thing to meet those goals, what would it be? A Facebook like? A donation? A share on social media? Pinpoint what you're trying to achieve and focus your "ask" on attaining this outcome.

## **A New Way to Ask**

When figuring out these specifics, it's important to recognize that your strategy could need adjustment. This is a major reason you should reevaluate how you've been doing things and make changes where appropriate. This is especially the case since getting donations is becoming increasingly difficult.

The big question you need to answer is whether you'd be willing to consider a new way of asking for support if you knew what your donors were passionate about. The answer to this question should be "yes," and if you reviewed all of the lessons prior to this video, you'll have a good idea of what congregants care about.

You already understand that your messaging needs to be focused based on donor types. This is why Donor Personality Tests and the DonorExperience Map are so important. Donor types will also dictate the appropriate way to frame your "ask". Your calls to action should provoke emotion based on what's important to your donors.

## Drip Before You Drop

Once you've taken time to perfect your messaging and come up with the *perfect* "ask," you're likely chomping at the bit to get started. Before dropping everything into your congregation's lap, though, you should first give them a little insight that something is coming. We call this the Drip Before You Drop Method, and it's important to your overall success.

Think back to John baptizing and preaching in the wilderness. Drove of people from the lands of Judea and Jerusalem came to be baptized, but as John preached, he said:

***"There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."***

This shows us that even Jesus sent someone beforehand to announce that an eternal message was coming. Similarly, you need to prime your audience for what's to come. Examples could include tweets, emails or texts strategically sent to let parishioners know that something important is on the horizon.

## The Big Picture

To effectively drip before you drop, though, you must focus on far more. Fortunately, you've handled plenty of this already. You've already had the meetings and conversations to prepare, and you've hopefully gathered the contact information necessary to relay these messages to your congregation.

All these things need to be lined up before your official "drop." All your messages and technology - such as websites and logos - should also be figured out and ready to go before jumping into the campaign. Fortunately, a large chunk of that work and the necessary communications have already been created for you within the D.O.N.O.R. Framework.

There's a good amount of work that must be done before an effective campaign is rolled out, but when you take care of this beforehand, you can make your congregation the primary focus. Whether you're creating original content or utilizing the proven templates provided in the DonorWERX Communication Plan, a few "drips" prior to the "drop" will lead you to success.

Before moving on to the next lesson, take a moment to review our example pre-launch announcement email. This will give you a solid understanding of what your "drips" should look like.