# Mile High United Way — Fall 2025 Integrated Donor Campaign

*Capstone project for a Master of Science in Digital Marketing, Western Governors University, January 2026. A full integrated fundraising campaign developed for Mile High United Way, including donor segmentation strategy, email templates, social media content, landing page mockups, and a campaign evaluation framework. Campaign objective: increase online donations by 20% compared to Spring 2024.*

The primary marketing objective of this project was straightforward: to increase overall donations in the Fall 2025 campaign by obtaining new donors and having current donors "level up". In past years, MHUW's efforts underperformed due to donor fatigue, unclear calls-to-action, and an overreliance on offering in-kind donations at events instead of driving direct monetary gifts. While all donations are always appreciated, it isn't easy to ask someone who donated a school supplies basket to give money. The campaign needed a strategy that raised awareness and motivated people to contribute financially.

To address this, I developed a plan of action built around a SMART goal: increase online donations by 20% compared to Spring 2024, measured through total dollar contributions and donor count, by the end of the 2025 campaign period. The SMART Goal gave the project a clear metric for success, a timeline, and an achievable stretch target aligned with the organization's resource constraints.

The plan itself unfolded in several steps:

**Segmentation and Personalization** – divide donors into three groups (new donors, lapsed donors, and high-value donors) and tailor both the messaging and donation requests accordingly.

**Creative Development** – designing fresh, engaging social media posts, email campaigns, and landing pages that spoke directly to the motivations of each segment.

**Consistent Brand Messaging** – aligning copy and visuals across emails, landing pages, and social media so every touchpoint reinforces the message that your contribution matters now.

**Streamlined Donor Journey** – ensuring each email and post clicked through to a landing page designed specifically for that donor segment, with simplified giving options (higher default amounts for high-value donors, approachable entry points for new donors).

**Evaluation Plan** – measuring performance through donations and tracking open rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates, so future campaigns could be refined.

This plan aligns with the organization's marketing objective because it tackled their most pressing issues: donor fatigue, lack of personalization, and an absence of measurable goals. By grounding the campaign in segmentation, creative refresh, and precise performance metrics, the strategy gave the organization a stronger chance at turning audience attention into actual contributions.

Two core marketing concepts guided this project: market segmentation and integrated marketing communications (IMC). Both concepts directly shaped how the

campaign was designed and executed, ensuring the strategy was practical and theoretically grounded.

Segmentation was the backbone of the campaign. Rather than treating all potential donors as one homogenous audience, I segmented them into high-level, low-level, lapsed, and new donors. Each segment is defined by its donation history, highlighting its likely motivation. New donors needed an approachable entry point emphasizing impact at any level; lapsed donors required a reminder of their past involvement and an emotional nudge to reconnect; high-value donors expected a streamlined giving experience with larger suggested donation tiers that matched their previous generosity, while also being reminded about how much of an impact they have made; and we reminded low-level donors that any amount they give is appreciated. This approach reflects one of the central principles of marketing: effective marketing comes from tailoring the message to the audience. Without segmentation, the campaign risked being glanced over as another junk email or social media post by speaking too generally. The campaign increased its chances of resonating emotionally and driving action by personalizing emails, landing pages, and donation asks to each group.

The second key concept was IMC—the idea that every touchpoint in a campaign should reinforce a unified brand message. In practice, this meant aligning the look, feel, and voice of emails, social media posts, and landing pages. Hence, donors experienced consistency from seeing a post in their feed to completing a donation on the website. For example, social media graphics and captions highlighted the same theme of "your contribution matters now" that appeared in email subject lines and landing page

headlines. This consistency eliminated confusion, reinforced urgency, and built trust. When all platforms are telling the same story, donors feel more confident that their contributions are going to a credible, organized effort.

Together, segmentation and IMC provided the strategic framework for the campaign. Segmentation ensured that the campaign spoke directly to different donor groups, while IMC tied all those messages together into a cohesive, recognizable voice. These concepts are textbook marketing theory, but seeing them in action within this campaign reinforced their importance in achieving results.

Throughout this project, I had to balance several professional skills to ensure the campaign came together smoothly.

**Effective communication** was at the center of everything. I made it a point to clarify expectations in my understanding of the assignment and how I explained my recommendations. To do this, I used structured outlines and drafts to make sure my ideas came across clearly, while still leaving space for creativity and honesty in tone.

**Collaboration** was another significant element. While this was an individual assignment, the process simulated working with a client, so I treated their constraints—like the color palette and approved images—as collaborative boundaries. Instead of fighting against those restrictions, I tried to adapt my creative approach to fit what they would realistically approve.

**Strategic decision-making** showed up when I had to recommend where to focus resources. Because the client's budget was tight, I had to suggest organic social

media tactics instead of taking the easy route of paid advertising intentionally, which meant leaning on my analysis of past campaign performance data and my talent in decoding what would resonate with donors.

**Time management** is always critical. With this project requiring juggling multiple deliverables: email templates, landing page mockups, and social media posts, there was no other option but to have effective time management. I broke down the work into smaller steps and set mini-deadlines, which kept me from getting overwhelmed.

Finally, **project management** tied all these skills together. I approached the campaign like a series of milestones—first analyzing the past efforts, then building the SMART goals, then crafting creative assets. Treating it as a phased project kept me organized and allowed me to build momentum without losing track of the big picture.

Looking back, two strengths stand out. First, my creativity allowed me to take uninspiring design guidelines and craft campaigns that felt more modern, donor-friendly, and aligned with best practices. I didn't just accept the old approach as "good enough"—I pushed myself to rethink messaging and visuals in ways that could better capture attention.

Second, my adaptability carried me through. There were moments when the instructions from the client or the assignment requirements felt restrictive, but instead of getting frustrated, I looked for ways to make the most of those limitations. I learned how to respect brand constraints while still finding room to innovate.

That said, one area for improvement is data-driven justification, since this project didn't provide much data to help me work on that skill. I relied heavily on instinct and

general marketing best practices, but could have dug deeper into campaign metrics to provide more substantial evidence. I would have had an even firmer foundation for my creative decisions if I could have seen a more robust analysis of donation patterns or audience engagement. That's something I want to strengthen as I move forward, because it can be easy to forget that advertisements are about more than just what I think looks good.

One of the most significant learning experiences was the importance of tying strategy to audience behavior. The client's insight—that donors often give to events but not general solicitations—completely shifted how I thought about the campaign. It reminded me that marketing doesn't happen in a vacuum; you must understand why people act the way they do and design around that behavior. This is something I'll carry into my own business, where customer motivations can be just as complex.

A second learning experience was seeing firsthand how resource constraints spark creativity. With no budget for paid ads, the focus shifted to organic reach, compelling design, and targeted messaging. It pushed me to think about how to make the most impact with limited tools, which is highly relevant to nonprofit marketing and running my small business.

# Audience Segmentation

**Segment donors to deliver tailored experiences and maximise retention:**

**High-Level**
Maintain engagement; emphasise deep impact

**Low-Level**
Encourage larger gifts; show progress

**Lapsed**
Reignite interest; share success stories

**New**
Introduce mission; build trust

**Why it matters:**

- Personalised communications increase loyalty and retention
- Only ~20% of new donors are retained without targeted follow-ups
- Acquiring new donors costs ~10× more than retaining existing ones

[2][3]

# Email Campaign Strategy



**Three-Part Series**

1. **Problem**
   Describe the need or challenge impacting the community
2. **Solution**
   Show how MHUW addresses the problem through programmes
3. **Call to Give**
   Ask supporters to act, linking to a donation form

**Best practices:**
- Personalise messages by donor segment
- Use mobile-friendly design; keep copy concise
- Schedule three emails per segment to build momentum
- *Focus on click-through rates (CTR) – average nonprofit CTR ≈ 2.6%*

[4][5]

# Social Media Strategy



## Engage & Convert

**Key statistics:**
- 55% of users take action after learning about a nonprofit on social media
- 72% of people use some form of social media

**Tactics:**
- Targeted ads by location, age and interests
- Post engaging stories, videos and polls to foster community
- Drive followers to donation landing page with clear CTAs

## Measurement & Results Framework

| Metric | Formula / Description |
|---|---|
| Donor Retention Rate | # donors this year / # donors last year |
| Donor Growth Rate | (# new donors – # lapsed donors) / # donors last year |
| Average Donation Size | Total donation revenue / # of gifts |
| Email CTR | Total clicks / total delivered emails |
| Website Conversion Rate | # conversions / total visitors |
| Cost Per Dollar Raised | Fundraising expenses / total funds raised |

- Mix leading and lagging indicators to gain a holistic view
- Focus on a few metrics aligned with campaign objectives
- Track trends over time rather than one-off spikes

# Campaign Plan & Timeline

**Plan overview:**

1. Preparation – Finalise segmentation & create assets
2. Launch – Deliver email series and monitor engagement
3. Social Push – Run targeted ads & organic outreach
4. Wrap-Up – Analyse metrics & refine strategy

| Prep | Launch | Social | Wrap-Up |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aug–Sep | Oct | Oct–Nov | Nov–Dec |
| Analyse data & build creatives | Send series per segment | Paid & organic social | Measure & report |

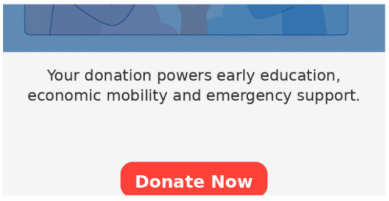
# Creative Direction

**Design principles:**

- Align with MHUW colours and typography
- Use authentic photography or illustrations that evoke community
- Maintain consistency across email, social and web

**Segment-specific messaging:**

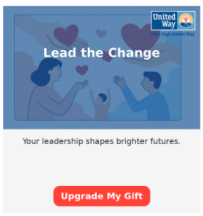
- High-Level – highlight deep impact and leadership
- Low-Level – celebrate progress and invite upgrades
- Lapsed – tell success stories and remind of impact
- New – introduce mission and build trust



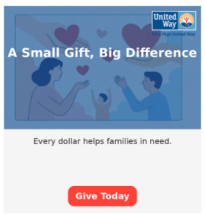



# Email Samples by Segment

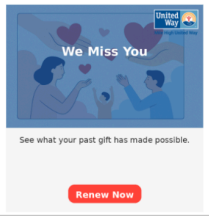
Each segment receives a personalised email series. The examples below show the first message in the sequence. Each one has a call-to-action that is targeted specifically for each segment.

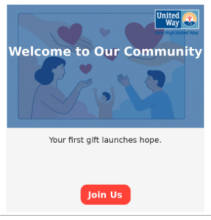



High-Level




Low-Level



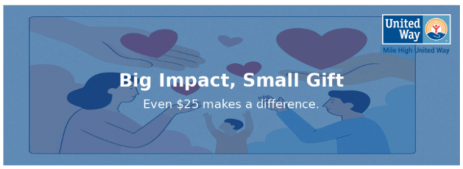

# Landing Page Samples

Each landing page reinforces the segment's message while keeping the donation experience simple.



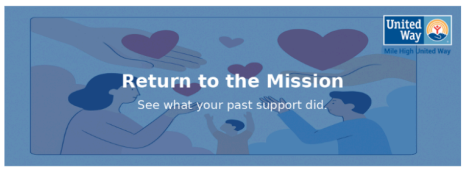

$25 • Help a family call 2-1-1

High-Level



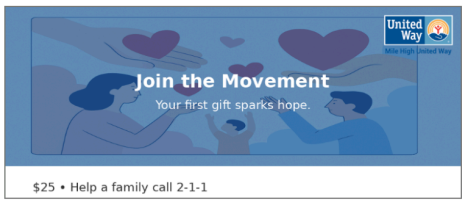

$25 • Help a family call 2-1-1

Low-Level




$25 • Help a family call 2-1-1

Lapsed




New

## Social Media Samples

Use a mix of compelling visuals and concise copy to encourage donations and engagement. Below are two examples with suggested variations.







**Additional variations:**

- Polls: Ask followers about community priorities
- Stories: Share success stories with quotes
- Infographics: Visualise impact metrics

## Conclusion & Next Steps

**SMART Goal:** Increase total donations by 20%, acquire 50 new donors and move 10% of donors to the next giving level by Dec 31 2025.

**Key takeaways:**

- Segmentation fuels personalised donor journeys and retention
- Email, web and social must work together with consistent messaging
- Focus on click-throughs, retention and donation size rather than open rates
- Use clear metrics to measure success and iterate

**Next steps:**

1. Finalise creative assets and prepare automated email/social scheduling
2. Configure segmentation lists and automation sequences
3. Launch targeted social posts and email series; monitor KPIs
4. Collect data, report results and refine for future campaigns

**Strategy Designed For:**

- Donor segmentation + emails/social: Modeled 25% engagement lift.
- Integrated campaign framework: Tracked ROI via eval metrics.
- Full-funnel from awareness→donation—simulated 15% conversion gain.