

**Acquia**  
EXPERIENCE DIGITAL FREEDOM

# ***THE CHARITY GUIDE TO DIGITAL***

**How Five Charities  
Took Engagement to  
the Next Level**



# Building a Foundation of Engagement

It seems the challenges of mobilising donors and volunteers are becoming increasingly complex.

For one thing, the number of new causes grows every year. This makes the competition for members, donors, volunteers, and, most importantly, budgets increasingly difficult.

At the same time, member and donor journeys have been disrupted. The people you want to reach are faced with new crowdfunding platforms, new mobile technologies, constant appeals for giving, and news feeds oversaturated with requests.

With all this noise, people want their giving (or participation) to be effortless and personal. The most successful organisations understand that an engaging experience is critical to attracting and keeping donors.

But in such a crowded landscape of giving back—where do you start? We gathered a list of organisations that wanted to address these challenges by transforming their digital experiences—and saw results.

**In this guide, we've boiled their strategies down to the 5 key ways your charity can deepen online engagement with your stakeholders.**

# KEEP CAMPAIGNS FRESH

**How do you prevent donor fatigue? It not only stalls fundraising, but generic mass-communication and repetitiveness can also erode or even repel participation.**

There's a solution, though: Instead of falling into predictable cycles of fundraising, become more responsive to current developments, new milestones and spontaneous events.

Quickly spin up a microsite that's relevant to a current event—it could be as simple as a single web page with

a dedicated URL and unique branding. Then, turn your efforts to driving traffic there. A specific destination like this sparks engagement through timeliness, novelty and urgency. Best of all, your new presence and fresh message could inspire action from a set of donors you haven't even tapped into yet.

## PARKINSON'S UK

Parkinson's UK launched its "We Won't Wait" campaign to recruit new supporters during a dedicated week of awareness. The campaign needed a microsite that would stay secure, reliable, and ready for an inundation of support in a concentrated period of time.

Using Acquia Cloud and Drupal 8, Parkinson's UK was able to get the campaign to market quickly, generating thousands of new financial supporters and capturing the details of thousands more for future nurturing.

In total, more than 500,000 people took action during the campaign.



# MAKE IT CONVENIENT

**A slow digital experience frustrates the very people you're trying to help — or who are trying to help you.**

Giving can be an emotionally based impulse, and anyone compelled to action wants to satisfy that impulse immediately. For website users in crisis situations, it becomes even more important.

Keeping information up-to-date is vital, but that's just one step. It also needs to

be quickly accessible, and available on multiple devices and platforms, to keep the information flowing and engagement moving forward. By removing friction and delivering information at the right time and on any device, charities can make each interaction productive and positive.

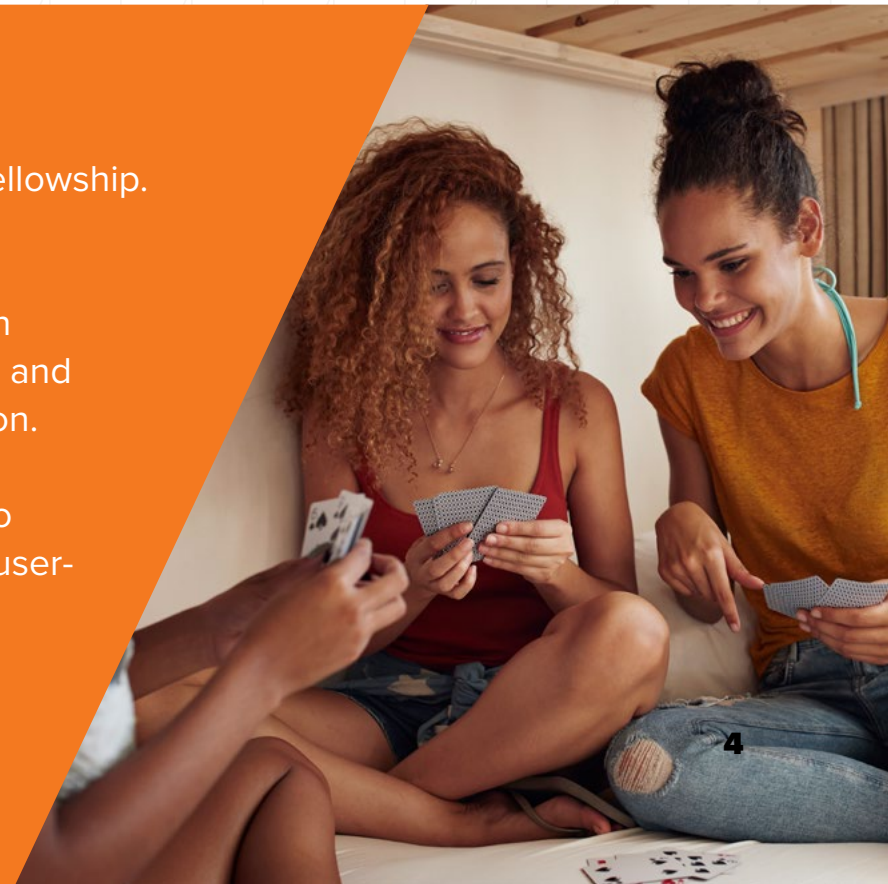
## YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATION

YHA supports young people by providing shelter, friendship and fellowship. In 2017 alone, YHA served over 1.1 million young adults.

A disjointed network of websites prevented YHA from providing an intuitive user experience. They struggled to manage multiple sites, and failed to provide customers and prospects with relevant information.

YHA partnered with Acquia Cloud and digital agency Microserve to launch a responsive Drupal 8 site that was a much cleaner, faster, user-friendly experience—all in just four months.

Traffic increased 200 percent, bounce rate decreased 60 percent, and year-over-year traffic increased seven percent.



# BE USER-FRIENDLY

**Your visuals may be stunning and your message may be moving, but none of it matters if updating your website is a pain.**

Let's face it: you probably don't have a large operations staff to keep your digital presence up and running. After all, charities frequently rely on volunteers with varying levels of skill to work on the site.

A website that's easy for inexperienced users to build and update means you can

gain more engagement from your volunteers and curate the website you need.

And your visitors? They'll receive up-to-date content more frequently—and won't be driven away by a stale site experience or outdated information.

## CITY YEAR

City Year needed to recruit its next generation of volunteers to help keep students in school and on track. That meant an updated web presence.

Using Acquia Cloud and Drupal, the organisation worked with eight of its team members—with no development experience—to build out content on their entire website in 2 months.

Now, the organisation can scale its mission statement and expand its program farther. And because Drupal is an active, open source community, City Year can benefit from project innovation thanks to millions of Drupal developers.



# ***ENCOURAGE RETURN VISITS***

**No matter how your organisation operates, it's difficult to sustain your mission through one-time donations. Repeat engagement is imperative.**

When it comes to your website, it's a non-starter if visitors don't see what you have to offer. If information is buried too deeply in site navigation, visitors will experience difficulty finding it—and frustration when they can't. Even worse, your vital offerings may never be discovered.

Allow site visitors to take full advantage of all your opportunities by cleaning up navigation and bundling related information on a single page. This helps users beyond their initial search and invites them to discover more.

## ***DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS***

Denver Botanic Gardens is a cultural staple of the Mile High City and has a lot to offer visitors. However, its hidden-gem programs were buried online in complex navigation and irrelevant content.

Using Drupal and Acquia Cloud, the organisation redesigned its website navigation, making it easier to browse events, see classes and buy tickets online.

This has enabled the Gardens to convert new guests into members—growing both engagement and revenue—and expose users to offerings they wouldn't have otherwise seen.



# GROW YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

**Technology makes it easier for everyone to connect in our communities, offices, online or on mobile. Your association's chapters and locations are no exception.**

In fact, there's no excuse not to collaborate with your partners, regional chapters, and local or international branches, whether you're an agency with field offices or a global federation.

When organisations tap into shared digital capabilities—and personalise regional properties for local membership—they

can unlock opportunities to gain economies of scale in their online efforts.

Make sure your technology platform can affordably and easily extend to affiliates. Allow each one the flexibility to standardise on the foundation you've built, develop unique customisations, and share back to the entire organisation.

## YMCA

Faced with the YMCA's 2,700 locations (and 900 different approaches to digital experiences), The YMCA of Greater Twin Cities developed Open Y, a content platform that allows YMCA chapters to share online technology.

Built with Drupal 8 with Acquia, Open Y sites allow individual associations to adopt the platform and develop at their own pace, without the typical licensing fees of proprietary web systems. Plus, participating chapters can integrate their own APIs to serve data-driven content to their local websites—engaging members on exercise equipment consoles, digital signage, and fitness tracking applications. By collaborating and sharing contributions, Open Y sites are engaging more than ever.



# Take Charity Engagement to the Next Level

The opportunities for fulfilling your mission are ever growing—and changing—in our increasingly connected world. To overcome the hurdles that come with these shifts, learn from the organisations who are finding success online.

Start with the five ways to deepen your engagement—and watch your visitors come back again and again.





# HOW ACQUIA CAN HELP

Savvy charity organisations aren't asking whether or not they need to transform their donor experience. They're figuring out what level of investment they need to put into digital marketing platforms, personalisation tools and better methods of engaging with existing and potential donors.

Moving ahead, charity marketers must offer a more intuitive, personalised digital experience, while gaining better control of their brand's digital assets and effectively

using analytics and insight to drive the most efficient journey for donors. Digging for data and insights to understand the true effectiveness of each effort is key. Knowing what's working, what's not and where the gaps lie are all vitally important.

**Acquia is the pioneering partner that can help build those experiences and relationships—on an organisation's own terms.**

**“Together, digital communications inspire 74% of donors to give. Organisations must invest in technology to stay relevant.”**

2018 Global NGO Technology Report

**Our web content management and consumer journey orchestration tools have empowered leading brands to create the world's greatest digital experiences.**

We help organisations establish the more intuitive, personalised digital experiences today's donors expect—all using open-source technology with the required security.

**We help charities gain control of their digital assets, deliver the right content at the right time and tap into the data and insights they need to understand what works, what doesn't and why.**

With Acquia, organisations can meet prospective and current donors with what they need at every step of the journey.

**For more information about how we're transforming the digital experience in the charity sector, visit <https://www.acquia.com/solutions/nonprofits>**

# **CONTACT ACQUIA**

**To learn about how Acquia can help you deliver a donor-first experience, please contact us at [sales@acquia.com](mailto:sales@acquia.com).**

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