

Arts Nonprofit with Campaign-Specific DRR Focus

Context: A regional arts nonprofit with a \$500,000 budget relies on donors acquired through annual gala events and online crowdfunding campaigns. It uses DonorPerfect and has a part-time development coordinator.

Starting DRR (2024): 38% overall (slightly below the industry average), with 20% for first-time donors (mostly gala attendees), 55% for repeat donors, and 75% for major donors.

Challenge: Gala donors give generously but have low retention, as many view their gift as a one-time event contribution.

Growth benchmark: Increase overall DRR to 42% by the end of 2025 (a 4% increase) and first-time donor DRR to 25% (a 5% increase), with a focus on gala donors.

Strategies:

- ☒ **Gala donor onboarding:** Send a post-gala thank-you video from the artistic director and a follow-up email series inviting donors to free community performances.
- ☒ **Recurring giving for gala donors:** Offer a “Patron Circle” monthly giving option at the gala and follow up with non-recurring donors to convert them.
- ☒ **Impact storytelling:** Share monthly social media posts and emails showcasing how donations fund free youth art programs.
- ☒ **Lapsed donor campaign:** Target gala donors who lapsed in 2023 or 2024 with a “Come Back to the Arts” campaign, offering early access to 2025 gala tickets.

Tracking methods:

- ☒ Use DonorPerfect to tag gala donors and calculate DRR for this cohort quarterly.
- ☒ Export data to Excel to compare retention by acquisition channel (gala vs. crowdfunding).
- ☒ Track social media engagement and email click-through rates to gauge storytelling effectiveness.

Progress (Mid-2025):

- ☒ First-time donor DRR for gala donors increases to 23% due to the onboarding series and 5% conversion to monthly giving.
- ☒ Overall DRR reaches 40%, with 20 lapsed donors reactivated through the “Come Back” campaign.

Outcome (End of 2025):

- ☒ Overall DRR reaches 42%, meeting the target.
- ☒ First-time donor DRR hits 25%, with gala donor retention improving to 27%.
- ☒ The “Patron Circle” grows by 15 donors, contributing to a 10% increase in recurring revenue.
- ☒ Crowdfunding donor DRR remains stable at 22%, prompting plans to apply gala strategies to this segment.

Takeaway: Nonprofits with campaign-specific donor bases can boost DRR by treating event donors as long-term supporters through targeted onboarding and engagement.